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Jeroen Bosch, editor

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES



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NEW IN CHESS

SOS – Secrets of Opening Surprises 3

SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

3

Edited by
JEROEN BOSCH

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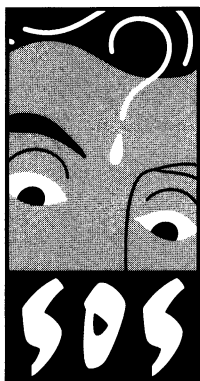
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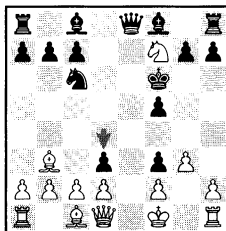
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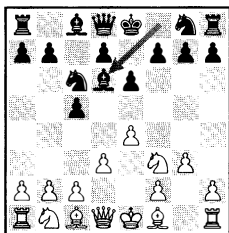


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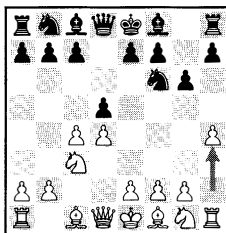


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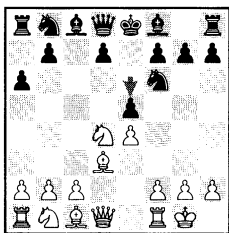


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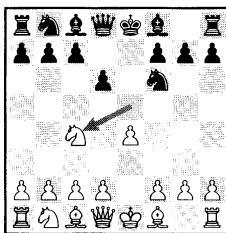


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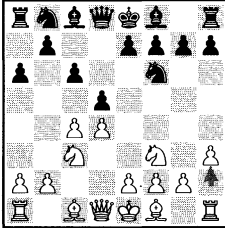


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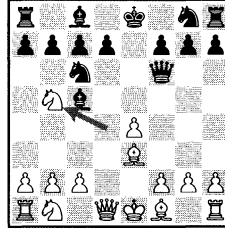


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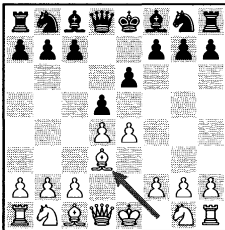


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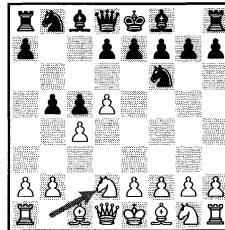


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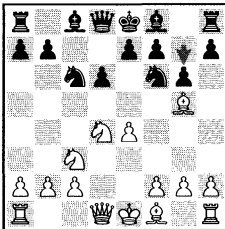


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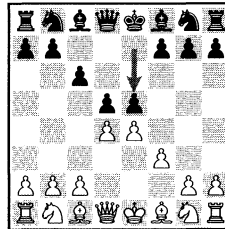


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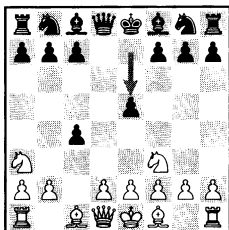


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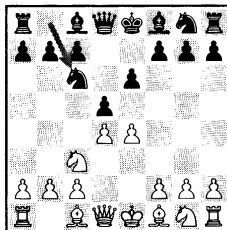


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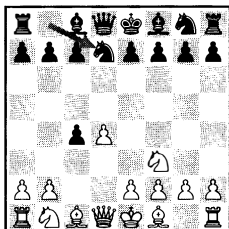


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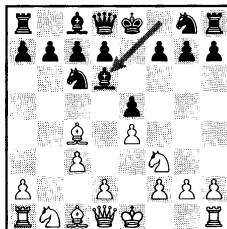


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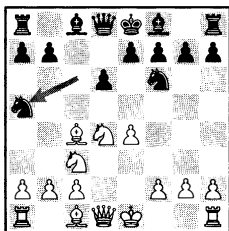


5...♞d6!? – Old Wine in New Bottles

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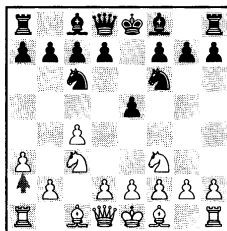


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English or Sicilian Reversed



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CHAPTER 1

Jeroen Bosch

The SOS Files

Albin Galore

SOS-2, Chapter 5, p.38

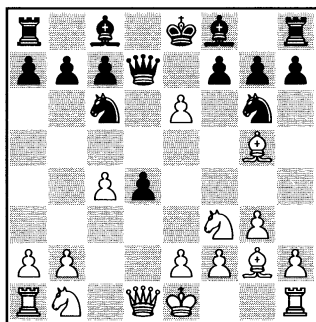
There have been plenty of high-profile clashes in the Albin lately. Especially, Morozevich and Nakamura are putting up a decent Albin show, employing of course Morozevich's interpretation with 5...♗ge7.

□ Alexey Dreev
 ■ Hikaru Nakamura
 Gibraltar 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5

I wonder how often Dreev has been confronted with the Albin in a serious game.

3.dxe5 d4 4.♗f3 ♗c6 5.g3 ♗ge7
 6.♗g2 ♗g6 7.♗g5 ♗d7 8.e6



In reply to 8.0-0, 8...h6! was Morozevich's crucial novelty against Gelfand in Monaco 2004 (see SOS-2). After 9.♗f4 ♗xf4 10.gxf4 g5 11.♗bd2 gxf4 a recent game Narciso Dublan-Fluvia, Badalona 2005, went: 12.♖h1 (12.♗e4 was Gelfand's choice) 12...♗g7

13.♗b3 ♗xe5 14.♗fxd4 0-0 15.♖c2 ♖g4 16.♗e4 ♖h5 17.♗g1 c5 18.♗f3 ♗xf3 19.♗xf3 ♖h8 20.♖d2 ♖f5 21.♗c1 ♗e6 22.♗d3 ♗ad8 23.♗ac1 ♗e5 24.b3 ♖e4 with a sharp game and approximately equal chances.

8...fxe6

In Wiley-Rudolf, Budapest 2005, Black had compensation for the pawn after 8...♗b4+!?N 9.♗bd2 ♖xe6 10.a3 ♗xd2+ 11.♖xd2 h6 12.♗f4 ♗xf4 13.♖xf4 ♖xc4 14.♗c1 ♖b5 15.♗xd4 ♗xd4 16.♖xd4 0-0 17.♗xc7 ♗e8.

9.a3

The main continuation is 9.0-0e5 and now:

● 10.♗bd2 h6 11.♗h4 ♗d6?! (11...♗e7 as in Krasenkow-Morozevich, Podolsk 1993, is preferable) 12.c5! (the same trick as in Van Wely-Morozevich, Monaco 2004 – that game went 10.♖a4 ♗d6 11.♗bd2 h6 12.c5) 12...♗xc5 (12...♗e7) 13.♖c2 ♗xh4 14.♗xh4 ♗b6 15.♗g6 ♗g8 16.♖c4 ♖e6 17.♗xc6+ (17.♗d5 ♖xg6 18.♗xg8 (18.♗xc6+ ♖f8) 18...♗h3 with a certain amount of counterplay to compensate for the exchange) 17...bxc6 18.♗xe5 ♖xc4 19.♗dxc4 and White was better in Susan Polgar-Nakamura, Virginia Beach rapid 2005.

● 10.a3 a5 11.♖a4 h6 12.♗c1 ♗d8. Black opts for the ending and is playing it safe (one would think other openings would be better suited for such an approach!). 13.♖xd7+ ♗xd7 14.b3 ♗e6. Black has no problems in this ending. The players agreed a draw here. Izoria-Nikolaidis, Athens 2005.

9...a5

Not allowing 10.b4, which would gain space on the queenside.

10. ♖a4 h6

This is always useful, Black will be able to develop his bishop to e7. He has to watch out, though, for tricks involving the unprotected knight on g6.

11. ♖c1

Un-developing the bishop, but leaving the d2-square available for his knight. If White hadn't played 9.a3 he could have contemplated playing ♖d2 and ♖a3.

11...e5 12. ♖bd2 ♖e7 13.0-0 0-0

A fairly balanced position. Black's space advantage in the centre (due to the Albin pawn on d4) is neutralized by White's control over the e4-square and the h1-a8 diagonal. White now starts his offensive on the queenside.

14.b4 ♖d8

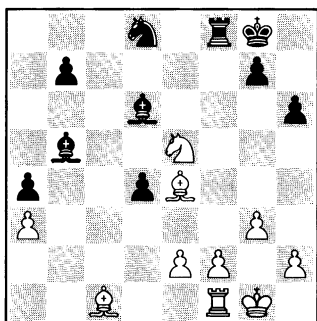
A sensible reaction.

15. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 16.b5 a4! 17. ♖e1 c6 18. ♖b1 cxb5 19.cxb5 ♖a5 20. ♖e4 ♖h8 21. ♖d3 ♖hf7 22. ♖c4

Exchanging his weak b-pawn for the e-pawn.

22...♖xb5 23. ♖xb5 ♖xb5 24. ♖cxe5 ♖xe5 25. ♖xe5 ♖d6

Not 25...♖xe2? when 26. ♖e1 ♖b5 27. ♖g6 is unpleasant.



26. ♖d5+

Dreev forces the draw, as he is definitely not better after 26. ♖d3 ♖e8 27. ♖f3 ♖c6.

26...♖h7 27. ♖e4+ ♖g8 28. ♖d5+ ♖h7 29. ♖e4+ ½-½

□ **Ivan Sokolov**

■ **Alexander Morozevich**

Wijk aan Zee 2005

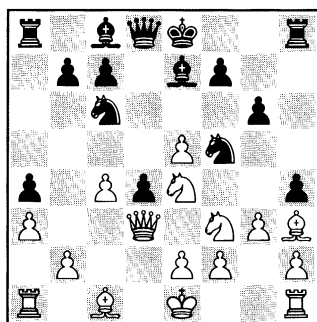
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4. ♖f3 ♖c6 5. ♖bd2 ♖ge7!? 6. ♖b3 ♖f5!

Stronger than 6... ♖g6 7. ♖bxd4 which offers Black no compensation.

7.a3

It would be interesting to know what Morozevich had in mind after the 'boring' 7.e4!?. The ending after 7...dxe3 8. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 9.fxe3 first occurred in the stem game Lehmann-Smederevac, Hoogovens Beverwijk 1965. After 9... ♖c6 10. ♖d3 ♖fe7 11. ♖bd4 ♖g4 12.h3 ♖xf3 13. ♖xf3 ♖g6 14. ♖xg6 hxg6 15. ♖e2 Smederevac held a draw after many adventures. The Dutch Hoogovens company is now part of the Corus concern – did Morozevich know about this historically significant game? In a recent game 9... ♖b4+ was played, after 10. ♖f2 ♖e6 11. ♖d3 ♖c5 12. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 13.a3 a5 14.b3 0-0 15. ♖d2 ♖d8 16. ♖e2 White skilfully exploited his endgame plus in Fluvia Poyatos-Fluvia, Badalona 2005.

7... ♖e7 8.g3 a5 9. ♖d3 a4 10. ♖bd2 h5 11. ♖h3 g6 12. ♖e4 h4



With a good feeling for symmetry Black pushes both his rook-pawns to the fourth rank. His last move is in fact a mistake as 13.g4! ♖g7 14. ♖d2 ♖e6 15.0-0-0 is virtu-

ally winning as Morozevich himself indicated after the game.

13.♙f4? hxg3 14.hxg3 ♘g7

Here 14...♗xg3 is answered by 15.♙d7+! ♗xd7 16.♖xh8 ♜xh8 17.♗xg3 ♖e8 18.0-0-0 when White is at least somewhat better.

15.♙g2

Instead of the text, 15.♗f6+ ♙xf6 16.exf6 ♗e6 17.♜e4 was better.

15...♖xh1+ 16.♙xh1 ♙f5 17.♗fg5 ♗a5!

Not 17...♙xg5? 18.♙xg5 ♙xe4 19.♜d2! which gives White a superior game. Morozevich just continues to play his trademark type of chess. In soccer terms we would call Morozevich an exponent of Dutch total football. He uses the wings to make the board as 'broad' as possible.

18.♜f3 ♗e6 19.♗h7

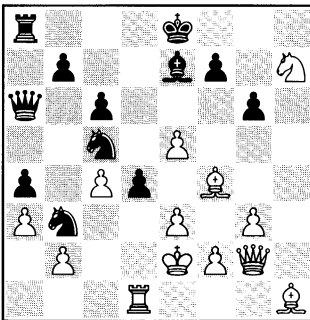
19.♗xe6 was less ambitious and wiser.

19...♙xe4 20.♜xe4 c6 21.e3?

Now Morozevich develops a raging initiative.

21...♗b3 22.♖d1 ♜a5+ 23.♖e2 ♗ec5

24.♜g2 ♜a6



White's game is beyond saving.

25.♖f1 ♜xc4+ 26.♖g1 ♜c2 27.♜f3

d3 28.♙g5 ♗e4! 29.♙xe7 ♗xf2!

30.♜xf2 ♜xd1+ 31.♖g2 ♜c2 32.♙d6

0-0-0 Or 32...d2. 33.♖g1 ♜xf2+

34.♖xf2 ♖h8 0-1

☐ **Veselin Topalov**

■ **Alexander Morozevich**

Monte Carlo rapid 2005

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e5 3.dxe5 d4 4.♗f3 ♗c6 5.a3 ♗ge7

Morozevich always plays 5...♗ge7 – regardless whether White plays 5.g3, 5.♗bd2 or 5.a3 as in the present game. Established Albin theory cites 5...♙e6 with approximately equal chances.

6.b4

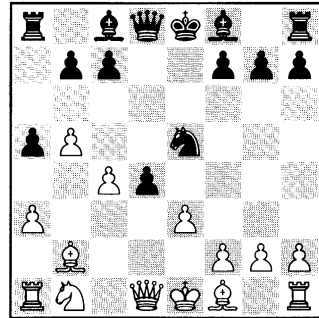
More interesting than 6.g3 ♗g6 7.♙g2 ♗gxe5. Topalov isn't going to give up the gambit pawn for nothing.

6...♗g6 7.♙b2 a5!

A useful interpolation to weaken White's queenside before taking on e5.

8.b5 ♗cxe5 9.♗xe5 ♗xe5 10.e3

Here 10.♙xd4 ♗xc4 11.e3 transposes. Not 10.♜xd4?! ♜xd4 11.♙xd4 ♗xc4 with a nice ending for Black.



10...♙e6 11.♙xd4 ♗xc4 12.♜c2 ♗d6

13.♙d3

Considering Black's next move 13.♗d2 comes into consideration. Nothing special is 13.♗c3 ♗f5 14.♙e5 ♙d6.

13...♜g5!?

Morozevich typically seeks complications. Both g2 and b5 are under attack.

14.f4 ♜h4+ 15.g3 ♜h5

According to Nunn White is better after

15...♖h3 16.♟f2. Obviously 16.♞xc7 would be a big blunder because of both 16...♞g2 and 16...♞c8.

16.♜c3 ♝f5?!

John Nunn gives 16...a4 17.0-0 ♚b3 concluding that White is slightly better.

17.0-0 0-0-0

17...♜d4 18.exd4 doesn't work for Black because of the threat 19.f5 – his king won't find a safe haven in time. For example 18...♚d6 19.f5 ♚d7 20.♞ae1+.

18.♚a7!

Excellent play by Topalov. For the moment the bishop cannot be trapped, while it assists in a deadly attack on Black's monarch.

18...♞g4 19.♜e4

Computer programs quickly indicate that White wins here with 19.♜a4! when a powerful check on b6 can only be prevented with the futile attempt to run (but not hide) with 19...♟d7.

19...♞d7 20.♞fd1

And again Topalov misses a good opportunity (remember that this is a rapid game). White has an edge after both 20.♜f2! ♞g6 21.♞fcl, and 20.♚e2 ♞g6 21.♞fd1 (Nunn).

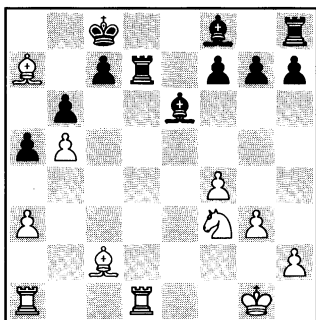
20...♞f3

The queen now causes enough confusion.

21.♜g5

Winning a piece but suddenly the odd position of the bishop on a7 will tell.

21...♜xe3! 22.♜xf3 ♜xc2 23.♚xc2 b6



The trap snaps shut!

24.♜e5 ♞xd1+ 25.♞xd1 ♚xa3 26.f5 ♚a2

Aesthetically pleasing and also the only move of course. Topalov's next move is a clear mistake.

27.♞a1? ♚c5+ 28.♟f1 ♞e8! 29.♞e1

29.♞xa2 ♞xe5 and the bishop on a7 is lost. This was still the best chance as the opposite coloured bishops (after a subsequent ♚xb6) offer White some hope for the draw.

29...f6!

Liquidating into a won ending.

30.♜d3 ♞xe1+ 31.♟xe1 ♚d6 32.♜c1 ♚d5

Black's bishops dominate, the rest is easy.

33.♚b3 ♚e4 34.♚xb6 cxb6 35.♚e6+ ♟c7 36.♟e2 ♚e5 37.♜d3 ♟d6 38.♟e3 ♚d5 0-1

Falling Short in the fast Lane

SOS-2, Chapter 8, p.63

Nigel Short played 3...h6 in the French Tarasch at the 2004 Olympiad. He got a decent position, but unfortunately missed a spectacular tactic.

□ **Gary Lane**

■ **Nigel Short**

Calvia ol 2004

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♜d2 h6 4.c3

The main line is 4.♜gf3 ♜f6 5.e5 ♜f7 6.♚d3 c5 7.c3 ♜c6. In Purtov-Shtyrenkov, Alushta 2004, Black went 7...b6 instead, after 8.♞e2 a5 9.0-0 (9.a4 ♚a6 10.♚b5!?) 9...♚a6 10.c4 (10.♚xa6 ♜xa6 11.c4) 10...♜c6 11.cxd5 ♚xd3 12.♞xd3 ♜b4 13.♞e4 ♜xd5 he had realized his positional idea.

4...c5 5.♜gf3

The recent Navara-Cifka, Karlovy Vary 2005, went: 5.exd5 ♞xd5 (5...exd5) 6.♜gf3

♘c6?! (stronger is 6...cxd4! 7.♘xd4 – 7.♙c4 ♖h5 – 7...♘f6 as in a game Kudrin-Atalik, see SOS-2) 7.♙c4 (now White gains some time, play transposes into a normal Tarrasch line where ...h6 is not so useful) 7...♗d8 8.♘b3 cxd4 9.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 10.♘xd4 a6 11.♙f4± ♙d6? and this is a blunder because of 12.♘c6! bxc6 13.♗xd6 ♗xd6 14.♙xd6 with a big edge due to the pair of bishops.

5...♗f6 6.exd5 ♘xd5 7.♘b3 ♘d7 8.♙d3 ♗c7

Gaining a useful tempo because of the threatened fork.

9.♙c2 b6 10.0-0 ♙b7 11.♞e1 ♙e7

Black is fine here.

12.♘e5 ♘xe5 13.dxe5 0-0-0 14.♗g4 h5 15.♗c4

15.♗xg7? ♙h4! traps her majesty.

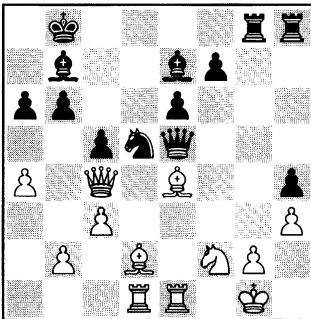
15...g5

Perhaps the crude 15...♗c6!? 16.♙e4 f5 17.exf6 gxf6 when 18.♙f3 is perhaps a tad better for White.

16.a4 a6 17.♙d2 ♘b8 18.♞ad1 g4 19.♘c1 ♞dg8 20.♙e4 h4 21.♘d3 g3?!

This should have been prepared, for instance by 21...♘a7.

22.h3 gxf2+ 23.♘xf2 ♗xe5?



The point of Short's previous moves. There is a flaw however, for, after

24.♙xd5! ♙xd5

(instead 24...♗xd5 25.♙f4+ wins even more easily) White has

25.♗xd5! ♗xd5

25...♗xe1+ 26.♞xe1 exd5 27.♞xe7 is rather similar to the game.

26.♙f4+ ♙d6 27.♙xd6+ ♘c8 28.♞xd5 exd5 29.♞e7 ♞h6 30.♙f4 ♞hg6 31.g4! hgx3 32.♘g4

and Black's rook and pawns are no match for the well-coordinated White pieces.

32...♞g7 33.♘g2 d4 34.cxd4 cxd4 35.♙e5 d3 36.♞c7+

36.♙xg7 ♞xg4 was the trap, even though 37.♞c3 wins comfortably. But not 37.hxg4? d2 38.♞e8+ ♘c7 (38...♘d7? 39.♞e4+-) 39.♞e7+ ♘c8 with a draw, as 39...♘c6? 40.♙e5 loses.

36...♘d8 37.♞c3 ♞xg4

Otherwise White's win is elementary.

38.♞xd3+ ♘e7 39.hxg4 ♞xg4 40.♞d4 ♞g5 41.♙f4 ♞g6 42.♙xg3 a5 43.b3 ♞c6 44.♞c4 ♘d7 45.♘f3

Some accuracy is still required. Not 45.♞xc6? ♘xc6 and with 46...b5 coming White would have to resign himself to the draw.

45...♞f6+ 46.♙f4 ♞c6 47.♘e4 ♞e6+ 48.♘d5 ♞f6 49.♙e5 ♞f3 50.♞c7+ ♘d8 51.♞c3 ♞xc3 52.♙xc3 ♘d7 53.♙e5 f5 54.♙f4 1-0

Radulski's Ruy Lopez

SOS-2, Chapter 16, p.121

Glenn Flear's exposé on the Fianchetto Spanish featured a spectacular game by Julian Radulski. In a subsequent game Radulski has refrained from the most critical line (7...♗b4+) – let's investigate why!

□ **Oliver Organdziev**

■ **Julian Radulski**

Vrnjacka Banja 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 g6 4.d4

A forcing line. More in Ruy Lopez style are:

– **4.c3** a6 5.♙xc6 dxc6 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 ♗g4 8.0-0 (8.♙e3 see SOS-2, the miniature game Jakubowski-Spicak, Polanczyk 2000, which ended in a quick win for Black) 8...♙g7 9.♗c3 ♗e7 10.♙f4 0-0 11.h3 (forcing his opponent to finally take on d4) 11...♙xf3 12.♞xf3 ♙xd4 13.♞ad1 c5 14.b4 b6 15.bxc5 bxc5 16.♗a4 ♞e8 17.♞a3 ♞c6 18.♞xd4 cxd4 19.♞xe7 ♞fe8 20.♞a3 ♞xe4 21.♞c1 ♞e8 22.♙xc7 d3 and Black was winning (but only drew) in Volokitin-Stevic, Celje 2004.

– **4.0-0** ♙g7 5.c3 a6 6.♙a4 d6 7.d4 ♙d7 8.d5 (8.♞e1 ♗ge7 9.♙e3 0-0 10.♞d2 ♗xd4! 11.cxd4 ♙xa4 is a useful trick to know: 12.♞b4 exd4 13.♙xd4 c5 14.♞xa4 cxd4, with a good game for Black, Fluvia Poyatos-Narciso Dublan, Mataro 2005) 8...♗ce7 9.c4 h6 10.♗c3 f5 11.♙xd7+ ♞xd7 12.♗e1 and now:

● 12...fxe4 seems to give White a slight edge: 13.♗xe4 ♗f6 14.♗xf6+ ♙xf6 15.♗f3 ♙g7 16.♗d2 0-0 17.♗e4 ♗f5 18.♙e3 ♗d4 19.♞c1 ♗h7 20.f3 ♞f7 21.♙xd4 exd4 22.♞b3 b6 23.♞ce1±, Stellwagen-Gagunashvili, Vlissingen 2004.

● 12...♗f6 13.f3 0-0 14.♗d3 c6?! (this was a move on the wrong side of the board, correct was 14...g5, see SOS 2, the game Khalifman-Short, Moscow 2001) 15.♙e3 cxd5 16.cxd5 ♞f7 17.♞b3 ♞af8 18.♗f2 and White was better in Gelfand-Malaniuk, Tallinn Keres memorial rapid 2005.

4...exd4 5.♙g5 ♙e7 6.♙xe7 ♞xe7

A slightly boring line is 6...♗gxe7 7.♗xd4 d5. White had a marginal advantage after 8.♗c3 dxe4 9.♙xc6+ ♗xc6 10.♗xc6 ♞xd1+ 11.♞xd1 bxc6 12.♗xe4 ♙f5 in Klovans-Shabanov, Satka 2004. Curiously, it was Black who missed a win in a pawn ending with his final (35th) move.

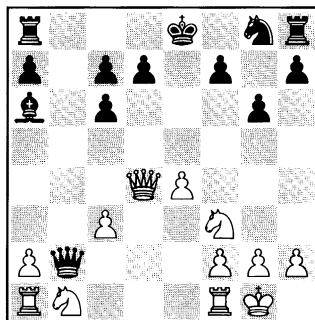
7.♙xc6

Not mentioned in SOS-2 was the less forcing 7.0-0!?. While this is hardly critical our

SOS-expert on this line – Glenn Flear – has let us know that it is important to continue with 7...♗f6 8.e5 ♗h5! (8...♗xe5? 9.♞e1) 9.♞e1 0-0 10.♙xc6 dxc6 11.♞xd4 ♙f5 with unclear play as in Galdunts-Giorgadze, Podolsk 1989. SOS-fans of the Fianchetto line better take note of 8...♗h5!

7...dxc6

Rather than the text, 7...♞b4+ was Glenn Flear’s main line (from the game Zozulia-Radulski, Marseille 2004). However, he later pointed out that there might be a few problems connected to the audacious queen check. After 8.c3 ♞xb2 9.♞xd4 bxc6 10.0-0 ♙a6



Flear now believes that 11.♗bd2! is very strong for White.

Another critical try is 11.♞e1!? f6 (11...♞xa1 12.♞xh8 0-0-0 13.♞d4 allows White a strong initiative according to Flear) 12.♗bd2 ♞b6 13.♞a4 ♙b5 14.♞a3 ♞a6 15.♞b2 ♗e7 (15...d6?! 16.e5!) 16.c4 ♙xc4 17.♞xf6 ♞f8 18.♞g7 as in the game Boudre-Flear, Bagnols-sur-Cèze 2004. And now, rather than the weakening 18...h5, Black should play 18...♙g8! when the struggle remains unclear (Flear).

8.♞xd4 ♗f6 9.♗c3 ♙g4 10.♗d2 ♙e6

Or 10...c5 11.♞e3 0-0-0 12.h3 ♙d7 13.0-0-0 ♙c6 14.f3 b6 15.♗c4 and now 15...♞e6 keeps about equal chances. In Vokarev-

Malaniuk, Alushta 2004, there followed instead 15...h5?! 16. ♖g5!±.

**11.f3 c5 12.♖e3 0-0-0 13.0-0-0 ♖d4
14.♗he1 ♗hd8**

with an equal game.

More Moro

SOS-2, Chapter 2, p.17

Who else than Alexander Morozevich could be expected to play an SOS versus Bareev's solid Caro-Kann. By the way, the fact that this was a blindfold game is quite relevant to the eventual outcome.

□ Alexander Morozevich

■ Evgeny Bareev

Monte Carlo blindfold 2005

1.e4 c6 2.♟f3 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.♟e5!
Attaboy!

4...e6 5.d4 ♟c6

Black has hardly chosen the most critical approach. In SOS-2 Ian Rogers now recommended 6.c3 ♟d6 7.f4!?. Moro's

6.♟b5

is perhaps less precise. The pin is not as effective because Black can still play ...♟ge7. Compare this to Sebag-Xu Yuanyuan, Cannes 2004, (see SOS-2) where after 4.♟e5 Black went 4...♟c6 5.d4 ♟f6 6.♟b5! ♖b6?! 7.c4! dxc4 8.♟c3 e6 9.♖a4! with a nice initiative.

**6...♖b6 7.c4 ♟b4+ 8.♟c3 ♟e7 9.0-0
0-0 10.♟xc6 bxc6 11.♟a4 ♖d8
12.♖c2 ♟d6 13.♗e1 ♖c7 14.♟d2
♟f5 15.♟f3 dxc4 16.♖xc4 a5 17.♟c5**

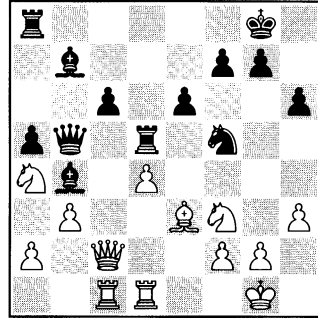
White has a slight edge.

**17...♖b6 18.♗ac1 h6 19.b3 ♗d8
20.♖c2 ♟f8**

**20...♟xd4 21.♟xd4 ♟xc5 22.♖xc5 ♖xc5
23.♗xc5 ♗xd4.**

21.♟e3 ♗d5 22.h3 ♖b5 23.♟a4 ♟b4

24.♗ed1 ♟b7



Morozevich now starts a creative combination which unfortunately contains a big hole.

25.a3? ♟xa3 26.♟c3

Winning the exchange?

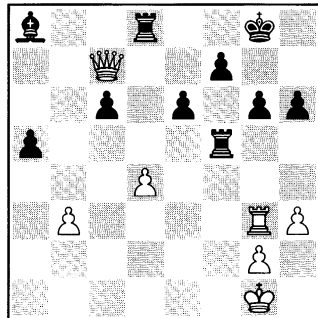
26...♟xe3! 27.fxe3 ♟xc1 28.♟xb5

Winning the queen?

**28...♟xe3+ 29.♟h1 ♗xb5 30.♖e4
♟g5 31.♟xg5 ♗xg5**

Hm, perhaps a rook, bishop and two pawns is a bit too much for only a queen?

**32.♗d2 ♗f5 33.♖e3 ♗d5 34.♖f4 ♗d7
35.♖e5 ♗d5 36.♖c7 ♗b5 37.♗d3 ♗c8
38.♖d7 ♗f8 39.♟h2 ♟a8 40.♗c3 ♗b7
41.♖d6 ♗bb8 42.♗g3 ♗b5 43.♖e7
♗f5 44.♖h4 ♟h8 45.♖e7 ♟g8
46.♟g1 g6 47.♖a7 ♗d8 48.♖c7**



After a lengthy manoeuvring game White has managed to get the kind of one-move

threat on the board that is all-important for these blindfold games.

48...h5?? 49.♖xd8+ 1-0

Probably this was more of a surprise for Bareev than his opponent's opening's choice...

SOS Miniature

SOS-1, Chapter 9, p.81

The following game (published in *British Chess Magazine*) is perhaps not exactly the most relevant update of our surprise weapon against the 2.c3 Sicilian. However, it sure is good fun!

□ Blair Connell

■ Nick Pelling

England tt 2004

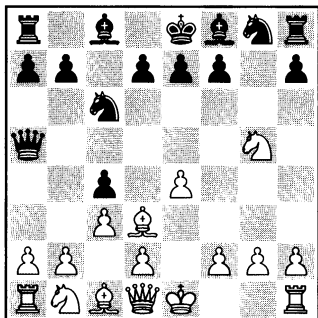
1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♖a5 3.♗f3 ♘c6 4.♕d3

This 'counter-SOS' is not as stupid as it looks – think of the anti-Sicilian line 1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.c3 ♗f6 4.♕d3. White plans to castle, play ♕c2 and d4. Black had a nice brain wave now – based on a cheapo.

4...g5!?

Playing on the dark-squares, sometimes ...g4 is annoying too. But can't he just take the bugger?

5.♗xg5 c4



Ouch! A double attack.

6.♞h5

This looks good: 6...♗h6 7.♕xc4 is curtains. However, your computer will like 6.♗xf7! ♗xf7 7.♕xc4+ and it is right. With three pawns for the piece and a potentially powerful centre, not to mention Black's unsafe king, White has superior chances.

6...♗f6!

A cruel reply, White can take f7 with check but still loses a piece.

7.♞xf7+ ♖d8 8.♗xh7

The desperado of a desperate man. White is much worse anyway, but his lack of coordination could not be better illustrated than by

8...♗e5 0-1

Armenian Tiger Wins SOS Prize

SOS-2, Chapter 12, p.91

Tigran Petrosian is a common Armenian name, and rightly so. With his refined and acutely developed sense of danger the 9th World Champion must have looked down from chess heaven in a state of shock at this effort of his compatriot and namesake. Following a piece sacrifice on move 4 in Glek's Four Knights, Petrosian boldly takes his king forward to f6 to avoid a quick draw by repetition. Clearly, a deserving winner of the SOS Competition.

□ Deep Sengupta

■ Tigran L. Petrosian

Kochin jr 2004

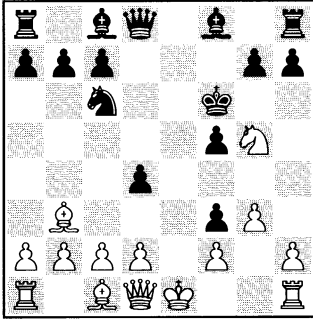
1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.♗c3 ♗c6 4.g3 ♗xe4!?

5.♗xe4 d5 6.♗c3 d4 7.♗e4 f5 8.♗eg5 e4 9.♕c4 exf3 10.♕f7+

10...♖d7 11.♕e6+ ♖e8 12.♕f7+

Aiming for a quick draw, but Tigran is out for blood!

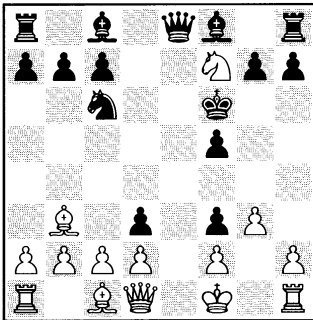
12...♖e7! 13.♙b3 ♖f6!



14.♘f7?

Missing Black's 15th, much safer was 14.d3 ♖e7+ 15.♖f1 ♖e2+ 16.♗xe2 fxe2+ 17.♖xe2 when Black is fine in the ending, but White has no particular problems either.

14...♗e8+ 15.♖f1 d3!



Paralyzing White's queenside, freeing the d4-square for the knight, introducing a big queen check on e2, and ignoring his rook on h8 completely.

16.♗xf3

16.♘h8 ♘d4! 17.c3 ♗h5 (17...♗e2+ is perhaps what a human would play in practice: 18.♗xe2 fxe2+ 19.♖g2 ♘xb3 20.axb3 ♙e6 21.c4 ♙d7 and Black should win) 18.h3 (18.cxd4 ♗h3+ 19.♖e1 ♗g2 20.♖f1 f4 and 21...♙h3 will kill White) 18...♘e2 threaten-

ing 19...f4 19.♙f7 (yes it's a computer defence) 19...g6 20.♗a4 f4 with a very strong attack (Short). Black wins after 16.cxd3 f4 17.h3 ♘d4 (17...♗e2+ 18.♗xe2 fxe2+ 19.♖g2 f3+) 18.♘h8 ♗h5.

16...♘d4 17.♗xd3 ♘xb3 18.♘h8 ♗c6!

An excellent intermediate move.

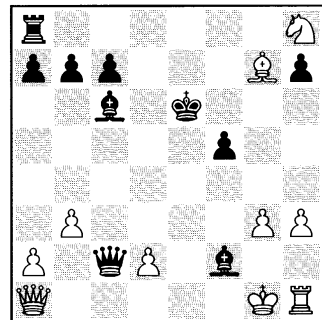
19.♖g1 ♘xa1 20.b3 ♗xc2?!

Much better was 20...♖e6 or even 20...♖e7. Now White restores material equilibrium.

21.♗d4+ ♖e6 22.♗xa1 ♙d7 23.♙b2 ♙c6 24.h3 ♙c5

There is a huge difference in activity, especially Black's menacing bishop pair is a formidable force.

25.♙xg7 ♙xf2+!



26.♖h2

26.♖xf2 ♗xd2+ 27.♖f1 ♗g2+ wins.

26...♗e4?

26...♙xg3+! 27.♖xg3 ♗d3+ 28.♖h4 ♗d8+ (this wins as any computer will point out. It's not so easy for a human to spot such a long backward move though) 29.♖g3 ♗g5+ 30.♖f2 ♗xd2+ 31.♖g3 ♗e3+ 32.♖h4 ♗f4+ 33.♖h5 ♙f3 mates.

27.♗f6+ ♖d5 28.♖c1?

Sengupta misses a saving opportunity (made possible by Black's 26th move), 28.♖f1 would have made it difficult for Black.

28...♖e8 29.♖c4? ♙g1+!

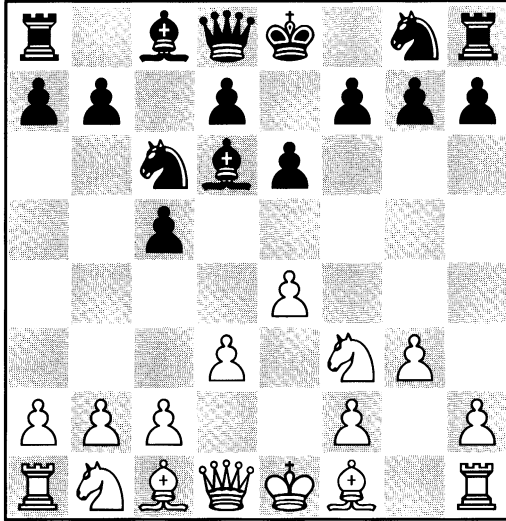
And mates.

0-1

CHAPTER 2

Mikhail Gurevich

Portisch's Ingenious Idea



King's Indian Reversed with 4...♗d6!?

The following short draw is important for the introduction of an ingenious plan to counter White's King's Indian set-up against both the Sicilian and the French. A revelation in the development of Chess Theory!

□ **Vladislav Tkachiev**

■ **Lajos Portisch**

Tilburg 1994

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.g3
♗d6!?**

This new and original move was introduced in this game by the great Creator of Opening theory, Lajos Portisch. Obviously, many players, including the author of these lines,

have developed the ideas behind this 'artificial' move. We have to admit the theoretical significance of this variation, as it applies to both the Sicilian and the French Defence. The common replies to 4.g3 are: 4...d5, 4...♗e7, 4...b6, or 4...g6. In developing the bishop in front of the d-pawn Black aims for the quickest possible development of his pieces – without revealing the pawn structure he intends to build! Black wants to play ♗e7, 0-0, ♗c7, and then d7-d6, or d7-d5, depending upon White's choice of strategy. Although developing a piece in front of the pawn goes against the traditional rules of chess strategy, practice has seen no refutation of Portisch's idea – at least so far...

After ten years of practice in this line the number of its supporters is rising, as the flexible pawn structure gives Black many opportunities. Grandmasters Kengis, Ehlvest, Kveinis and others play this provocative idea. Some variations after 4...♗d6 lead to typical Hedgehog-schemes (when White pushes d3-d4, and takes back with a piece after cxd4). In some games transpositions – or more accurately ‘similarities’ – to the Réti Opening, or to the Snake Variation of the Benoni (1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 ♗d6) occur. With reference to the Snake Variation please note that in our line Black will not give up space.

If a classical player like Lajos Portisch breaks the strategical rules by putting a piece in front of a pawn it must be good. Let's follow a possible line of reasoning when examining the alternatives. The bishop must be developed anyway, so the choice is between the e7-, g7- or d6-square. Positioned on e7 the bishop is not active enough, g7 looks like the perfect location for the bishop, although by playing g6 Black weakens his pawn structure, and in particular the dark squares on the kingside. So, Portisch arrived at the conclusion that the black bishop may well start to operate on the diagonals a7-g1 or a5-e1. Here I'm trying to analyse the process of creation, to explain the logic behind the fantasy of Creator. This is not an easy task. However, I can assure the Reader – as I have known Portisch and his healthy approach to life, for many years – that the Maestro was not drunk during the game. So, don't you ever believe that the bishop's coming to d6 was just a slip of the finger.

5. ♗e3

Tkachiev recognizes Black's intention to transfer the bishop to c7, and plays prophylactically attacking the c5-pawn. His example did not find many followers, as the bishop is not well placed on e3, and might be

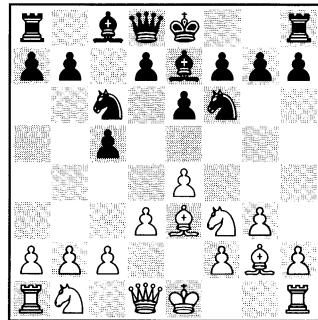
targeted by ♘g8-f6-g4, or by d7-d5-d4 (as happens in the game).

See the other games for White's main move 5. ♗g2.

5... ♘f6 6. ♗g2

Here 6. ♘c3 ♘g4 7. ♗c1 0-0 8. ♗g2 ♗c7 9. 0-0 ♖e7?! 10. ♘d2 ♘f6 11. ♘c4 a6 12. a4 ♖b8 13. ♘e3 led to an unclear position in Lang-Bezold, Deizisau 2002. The strongest player eventually emerged successful after the complications.

6... ♗e7!?



Portisch has first ‘provoked’ his opponent to put his bishop on e3, and now he simply retreats the bishop to e7 with the idea of d7-d5-d4.

I think Portisch would have loved to place the bishop on c7. But to make this possible Black would have to play b6, protecting the c5-pawn, and this would disconnect the bishop from the a5/b6-squares. At least such was Portisch's understanding at the moment of the game as I see it. Mind you, this was my understanding too when confronted with this problem. The Baltic Grandmasters, however, found a new solution to this problem. But let's not rush things at this point. More explanation will be given in our next game (Yudasin-Ehlvest).

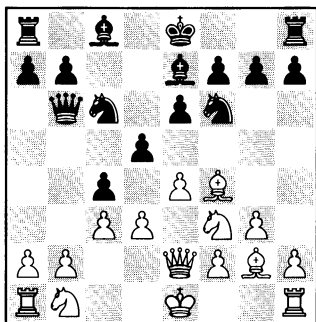
Instead of 6... ♗e7 the aggressive 6... ♘g4 looks more persistent, undermining the po-

sition of White's bishop on e3. For example: 7.♙g5 ♕e7 (also interesting is 7...f6) 8.♙xe7 ♜xe7 9.h3 ♜h6 10.♜bd2 d6 11.0-0 e5 12.♜e1 0-0 (with a very comfortable position) 13.g4!? (this kind of 'pseudo-activity' has to be avoided, as it weakens numerous squares around White's king) 13...♜d4 14.♜c4 ♜e6 15.♜e3 ♜f4 and Black is much better, Rivas Romero-Rocius, corr. 2002.

7.♜e2 d5 8.♙f4

Just like Portisch, Tkachiev is playing with the same piece twice in the opening. Here it constitutes an unpleasant necessity. Neither 8.exd5 ♜xd5 nor 8.e5?! ♜d7 9.♙f4 g5 10.♙c1 g4 could satisfy Vladislav Tkachiev. Black would get the better chances in both cases.

8...♜b6 9.c3 c4!?



This breaks White's pawn centre, and leads to an original position. In case of 9...0-0 10.e5 the centre would – at least temporarily – be blocked. In such a situation there is always the danger that Black's king would come under attack. This is an option, that Portisch does not even want to consider. However, in my opinion, it is not an obvious decision to avoid the natural 9...0-0 10.e5. After 10...♜d7 11.0-0 f6 12.exf6 ♜xf6 the position is not so clear.

The move in our main game opens the cen-

tre, and with an open centre, as my respectable Readers will probably know, flank attacks are not so dangerous.

10.dxc4 ♜xe4 11.♜e5 0-0 12.0-0 ♜e8 13.♜c2!?

This is an accurate move, with the idea of 14.♜d2 Tkachiev keeps the balance in the game.

13...♜f6 14.♜d2

And here the opponents agreed a draw in this highly interesting theoretical duel. Actually, the position is still full of life. White may even have some symbolic initiative. However, Black's position is solid with no particular weaknesses. So, there must be another practical explanation why the opponents agreed to such a 'grandmaster draw'.

For us, the significance of the game is clear. With Portisch's 4...♙d6 a variation was born and it started Life on its own. As I will demonstrate below it is alive and well today.

□ Leonid Yudasin

■ Jaan Ehvest

New York 2003

1.e4 c5 2.♜f3 e6 3.d3 ♜c6 4.g3 ♙d6 5.♙g2

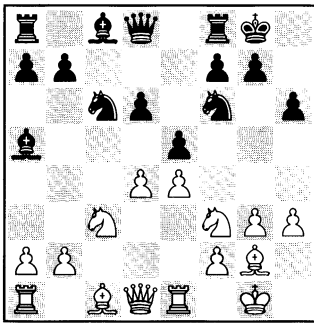
This is the main line of the variation. White finishes his development of the kingside without paying any attention to the opponent's 'strange' manoeuvres. With his strong control of the centre White will later make a choice out of two typical plans: (1) central play, or (2) a kingside attack. This game will illustrate the first (most classical) plan.

In the following game White tries to refute Black's strategy by building a strong pawn centre even before finishing his development. In a way, a natural reaction considering the exposed bishop on d6: 5.c3 ♙c7 6.♙e3 d6 7.d4 cxd4 8.cxd4 ♜f6 9.♜bd2 0-0 10.♙d3. Everything would be fine here, if

only the g-pawn would be on g2. Here, the main supporter of our system Edvin Kengis, immediately underlines the disadvantages of White's strategy: 10...e5 (with such ideas as 11...h3 and 11...g4, Kengis fights White's 'strong' pawn centre, and tries to establish control over the dark squares. The move 10...g4 was also interesting, winning two bishops, and e6-e5 will follow) 11.d5 b4 12.e2 g4 13.a3 xe3 14.fx3 a6 15.b4 b8 16.0-0 h3 17.f2 d7 18.h4 f6, Saulespuren-Kengis, Riga 2004. The knight enters into play, and Black is much better considering his two powerful bishops.

5...ge7

Kveinis has chosen another set-up here: 5...c7 6.0-0 f6 (another square for the knight) 7.e1 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 h6 10.d4 cxd4 11.cxd4 a5 12.c3?! (this is a primitive reaction – and the reason for White's future problems. The stronger 12.a2 needs to be researched) 12...e5.



Exactly like in the previous Saulespuren-Kengis game. It is an interesting strategical point of Black's strategy. Note that both Kengis and Kveinis don't mind allowing White to build a strong e4-d4 pawn centre. Moreover, they develop their pieces in the most flexible way and provoke their opponents to build this centre, only in order to attack and destroy it later on. A controversial

strategy perhaps, but we cannot find a game where it was refuted. The game now continued 13.d5 xc3 14.bxc3 a5 15.h4 d7 16.e3 c4 (Black's game is preferable) 17.f5 xf5 18.exf5 xe3 19.xe3 a5 20.c4 ac8 and Black is clearly better, Namyslo-Kveinis, Dresden 1996.

6.0-0 0-0

Ehlvest develops his pieces in a most economic fashion.

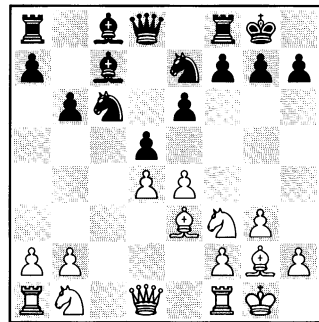
7.e3

This move was always worrying me, that is why I would play the bishop to c7 earlier. Black now has to play

7...b6 8.c3 c7

when the bishop doesn't enter the a7-g1 or a5-e1 diagonals. This looks problematic to me, but it doesn't worry Jaan Ehlvest.

9.d4 cxd4 10.cxd4 d5!



Here it comes, this illustrates the flexibility of the whole idea behind 4...d6. Black did not hurry with his choice of pawn structure earlier in the game, having developed his pieces while keeping all 'pawn-options' open. Ehlvest has waited for the best moment for counterplay in the centre. Let White strike first, let him show his intentions, and define his pawn structure. Only then you show him that the right counter-measures have been prepared. The set-up with d7-d6 and e6-e5, as in the comments above, would not be logical here,

as the bishop on c7 is blocked by the b6-pawn. So, Ehlvest fights for the centre in a different manner, provoking his opponent to close it, and after

11.e5

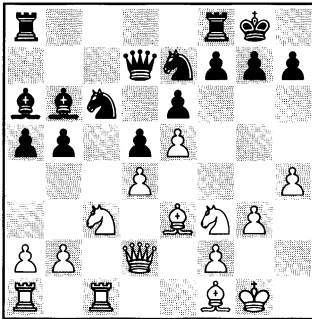
play has been transferred to a kind of 3.e5 Variation of the French Defence, where White's bishop has absolutely no business on g2 whatsoever.

Black would also have a good game had Yudasin tried to keep the centre open. For example, after 11.♘c3 dxe4 12.♘xe4 ♖b7 13.♙c1 ♙c8 Black has fine counterplay.

11...a5!

An introduction to a deep plan, Black's bishops are coming to a6 and b6, and the queenside-pawns will advance to claim space on the queenside.

12.♙d2 ♖a6 13.♙c1 b5 14.♘c3 ♖b6 15.h4 ♙d7 16.♖f1



The wrong choice in my opinion. Yudasin tries to resist on the queenside. Probably, 16.♘e2 was better, with the idea of ♘e2-f4-h5 attacking the opponent's king: 16...♘f5 17.♘f4 b4 (it isn't easy for White to develop activity on the kingside, but it was the only way to put at least some psychological pressure on the opponent) 18.♖h3 a4 19.♘h5.

16...f6!?

Ehlvest starts a kind of global warfare. Aggression all over the board.

17.exf6 ♙xf6 18.♘h2

Here 18.♘e5 was better: 18...♘xe5 19.dxe5 ♖xe3 20.♙xe3 d4 21.♙d1 with an unclear position, but Yudasin had no Fritz to his assistance.

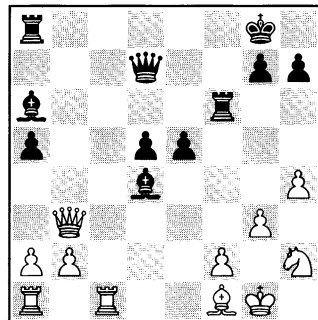
18...♘f5! 19.♘xb5

Or 19.♖xb5 ♖xb5 20.♘xb5 ♘xe3 21.fxe3 e5♣ and Black develops a strong initiative.

19...♘xe3 20.♙xe3

Of course 20.fxe3 ♙xf1+ 21.♘xf1 ♖xb5♣ is unacceptable for White.

20...e5 21.♙b3 ♘xd4 22.♘xd4 ♖xd4



What a career for the bishop! Here we see the full realization of Black's strategy. White is lost.

23.♘g4 ♙b6 24.♘xe5

A desperate act.

24...♙d6 25.♙c6 ♙xc6 26.♘xc6 ♙xc6 27.♙d1 ♖c4 28.♙c2 ♙c5 29.♙d2 ♖xf1 30.♙xd4 ♙xd4 31.♙xd4 ♖e2 32.♙xd5 ♖c4

And here was the right moment to stop the clock.

33.♙d2 ♖xa2 34.♖g2 ♖b3 35.g4 a4 36.♖g3 ♙e8 37.h5 ♖f7 38.♖f4 h6 39.f3 ♙e7 40.g5 hxg5+ 41.♖xg5 ♙e5+ 42.♖h4 ♙d5 43.♙e2 ♖f6 44.♙g2 ♙d4+ 45.♖g3 ♙c4 46.♙d2 ♙c2 47.♙d6+ ♖e7 48.♙a6 ♙xb2 49.f4 ♙a2 50.f5 ♙a1

White resigned.

Looking through the games so far, one may come to a clear conclusion: the plan of creating a strong pawn centre doesn't work for White. The pawn manoeuvres d2-d3-d4, in connection with g3, are not dangerous for Black.

□ Vladislav Nevednichy

■ Mihailo Prusikin

Miskolc (Hungary) 2004

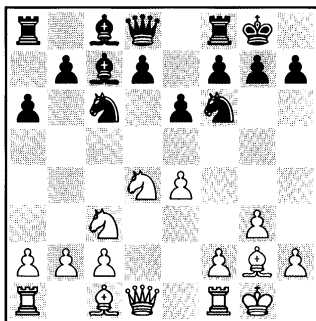
**1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 e6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♙d6
5.♙g2 ♙c7 6.0-0**

Black had no opening problems in the following rapid game: 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘ge7 (7...♘f6!?) 8.0-0 a6 9.♘c3 0-0 10.♙e3 d6 11.♙e1 ♘xd4 12.♙xd4 e5 13.♙e3 b5 14.f4 ♙b7 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.♙c5 ♙e8? (here Edvin missed a chance to seize an initiative: 16...♙b6 17.♙xb6 ♙xb6+ 18.♙h1 ♙ad8?) 17.♙h5 ♘g6 18.♙ad1 ♙c8 19.♙h3 ♙e6 20.♙xe6 fxe6 21.♙g4 b4 22.♙xb4 1-0 Magem Badals-Kengis, Liepaja 2001.

6...♘f6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.d4

A completely different approach. Nevednichy has developed his pieces, and then breaks in the centre, effectively transposing the game into an open Sicilian.

8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 a6



The game has transposed to a Hedge-

hog-like system. I don't see any danger for Black in this kind of position for two reasons. First, White spent a tempo on playing d3 and then d4. Second, one of the possible plans in the Hedgehog for Black is the manoeuvre ♙f8-e7-d8-c7 where the bishop is well placed usually. Simple calculation shows that Black economized and won a tempo by putting his bishop to c7 in only two moves.

10.h3 h6 11.♙e3 d5

Counterplay in the centre – an active (but unforced) response to White's strategy.

12.exd5

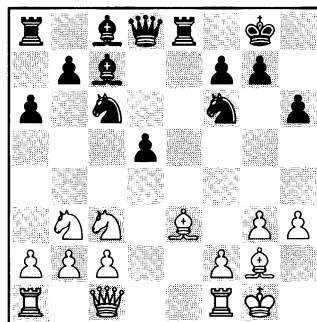
Interesting was 12.f4!?, with the idea of 13.e5 – controlling the centre. In case of 12...dxe4 (12...♘xd4 13.♙xd4!? dxe4 14.♘xe4±) 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♘xe4 White is slightly better.

12...exd5

Being an old fan of isolated pawns myself, I feel, that Black has plenty of counterchances here.

13.♘b3 ♙e8 14.♙c1

Uncertain play by White now provoked the German player into a promising exchange sacrifice.



14...♙xe3!? 15.fxe3

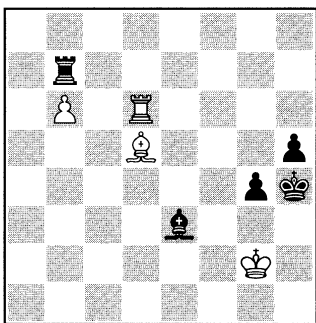
Naturally, 15.♙xe3 d4 is out of the question.

15...♙xg3

Here two powerful bishops and the compro-

mised position of White's king give Black more than enough compensation. The theoretically significant part of the game has passed. Suffice to say that Nevednichy was very fortunate to save the game.

16. ♖d2 ♙e6 17. ♗ad1 ♙e5 18. ♜xd5
 ♜xd5 19. ♙xd5 ♖g5+ 20. ♖g2 ♖xe3+
 21. ♘h1 ♙xh3 22. ♖f3 ♖xf3+ 23. ♗xf3
 ♙g4 24. ♗xf7 ♙xd1 25. ♖f1+ ♘h8
 26. ♗xd1 ♗d8 27. ♜c5 ♜b4 28. c4 b6
 29. ♜e6 ♗d6 30. b3 ♜xa2 31. ♗e1 ♙f6
 32. ♜f4 ♗d8 33. ♗e6 ♗b8 34. ♖g2 ♜b4
 35. ♙e4 a5 36. ♖f3 ♜a6 37. ♙c2 ♜c5
 38. ♗c6 ♜d7 39. ♜g6+ ♖g8 40. ♙f5
 ♜e5+ 41. ♜xe5 ♙xe5 42. ♖e4 ♙c3
 43. ♙e6+ ♘h8 44. ♙c8 g6 45. ♙h3
 ♖g7 46. ♗c7+ ♖f6 47. ♗c6+ ♖g5
 48. ♙e6 h5 49. ♙f7 ♙f6 50. c5 ♗b7
 51. ♙e6 bxc5 52. ♗xc5+ ♘h4 53. ♗xa5
 ♗e7 54. ♗a6 ♙c3 55. ♖f3 ♙d4 56. b4
 g5 57. ♖e4 ♙f2 58. ♖f3 ♙g1 59. b5
 g4+ 60. ♖g2 ♙d4 61. ♗d6 ♙e3 62. b6
 ♗b7 63. ♙d5



63... ♗b8 After 63... ♗xb6 64. ♗xb6 ♙xb6 the resulting opposite-coloured bishop ending is a theoretical draw. 64. b7 ♗f8 65. ♗e6 ♙a7 66. ♗e2 ♗d8 67. ♙e4 ♗d1 68. ♗f2 ♗e1 69. ♙c6 ♖g5 70. ♗f8 ♗e2+ 71. ♖f1 ♗c2 72. ♙e4 ♗c4 73. ♙d5 ♗f4+ 74. ♗xf4 ♖xf4 75. ♖g2 h4 76. ♙e6 h3+ 77. ♖h1 ♖g3 78. ♙xg4 ♖xg4 Draw.

□ Alexander Dgebuadze

■ Mikhail Gurevich

Antwerp 1999

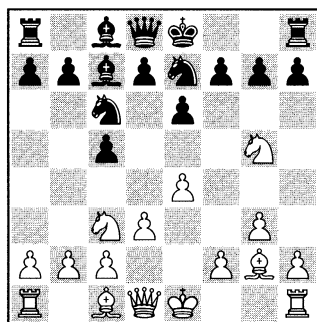
1. e4 e6 2. d3 c5 3. ♜f3 ♜c6 4. g3 ♙d6
 5. ♙g2 ♙c7

After 5... ♜ge7 6. 0-0 ♙c7 it is possible to play 7. ♜h4 with the idea of 8. f4 and an attack on the kingside. This is typical of Fedorov's approach. This player is always looking for the opponent's king.

It was now correct to play: 7... d5 (flank activity had to be met by central counterplay) 8. f4 (8. ♜d2 b6 9. f4 ♙b7 10. f5 ♖d7) 8... dxe4 9. dxe4 ♖xd1 10. ♗xd1 b6 with an unclear 'endgame'.

Kengis instead went: 7... ♜g6 (a nervous reaction, that I don't understand) 8. ♜xg6 hxg6 9. ♜c3 a6 10. a3 b5 11. ♙e3 ♖e7?! (it was a bad day for Edvin, he misses the following blow. Correct was 11... d6) 12. ♜d5! exd5 13. exd5 ♙b7 14. dxc6 ♙xc6 15. ♙xc6 dxc6 16. ♖f3 (Black's position now collapses) 16... ♖d6 17. ♙f4 ♖f6 18. ♖e3+ ♖d7 19. ♙xc7 ♖xc7 20. ♖xc5 and White is a pawn up in a superior position. Fedorov-Kengis, Vilnius 1997.

6. ♜c3 ♜ge7 7. ♜g5!?



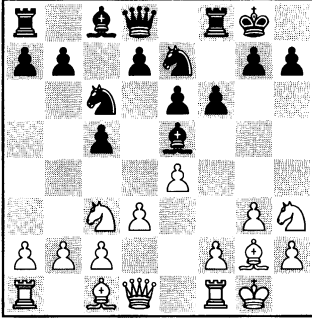
Inspired by Fedorov's ideas, my opponent introduces an interesting novelty. The threats are 8. ♖h5 and 8. f4, followed by

9.♟f3 gaining space and developing activity on the kingside.

7...f6

Another way to react was 7...h6 8.♞h3 (8.♞h5 g6 9.♞h4 ♞d4) 8...d5 9.0-0 0-0 10.f4 with an unclear position.

8.♞h3 0-0 9.0-0 ♟e5!?



An interesting waiting move. I try to provoke f4 before breaking in the centre.

Note that 9...d5 10.exd5 exd5 11.♟f4 would give White a certain initiative.

10.♞e2 d5 11.c3 d4 12.c4

A surprising transposition to a King's Indian defence type of position. The centre is blocked, which gives my opponent some chances to attack on the kingside, but I have more space and good perspectives on the queenside.

12...♞b8 13.f4 ♟c7 14.g4 b5 15.cxb5 ♞xb5 16.♞h1!?

Planning 17.f5. In reply to the immediate 16.f5 there follows 16...♟e5 17.♞hf4 ♞d6 with unclear play.

16...♟d7 17.f5 ♞b8

It is important not to close the centre completely, thus avoiding a straight attack. Moreover, control over the e5-square is important.

18.♞hf4 ♟xf4 19.♞xf4 ♞d6!?

Intending 20...♞e5. Bad is 19...e5 20.♞h5 ♞d6 21.b3 ♞fb8 22.g5 with an attack.

20.fxe6?! ♟xe6 21.♞xe6 ♞xe6

With the centre closed White's bishops are paralysed.

22.g5 ♞e5 23.gxf6 ♞xf6 24.♞xf6 ♞xf6 25.♞a4 a6 26.♟d2

Stronger was 26.♞c2 ♞h4 and Black is only slightly better.

26...♞xb2 27.♞f1

Not 27.♞e8+ ♞f8 28.♞h5 ♞xd3—.

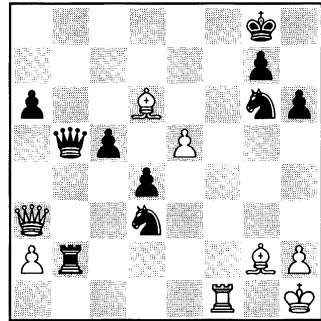
27...♞g6 28.♞a3 ♞b6

Losing is 28...♞xd2?? 29.♞b3+. But 28...♞c4 29.dxc4 ♞xd2 30.♞f3 h6 is also better for Black.

29.♟a5 ♞b5 30.♟c7 ♞xd3

Black now has a winning position.

31.♟d6 ♞g6 32.e5 h6!?



Unfortunately, *Zeitnot* starts to interfere. Instead 32...♞xg2 33.♞xg2 c4 followed by 34...h6 and 35...♞d5 was totally winning.

33.e6 ♞xg2 34.♞xg2 ♞c6+ 35.♞g1 ♞xd6 36.♞xd3 ♞xe6 37.♞f5∞ ♞e3+

No better is 37...♞xf5 38.♞xf5 c4 39.♞f2.

38.♞h1 ♞e5 39.♞e6+ ♞h7 40.♞f5+ g6 41.♞f6! = ♞e4+ 42.♞g1 ♞g4+

42...h5 43.h4! =.

43.♞h1 ♞e4+ 44.♞g1

Draw.

Considering all commented games I could come to only one logical conclusion: White has to be extremely lucky to survive after Portisch's ingenious ♟d6 idea!

I had already finished this article when fate, and Alexander Dgebuadze, gave me an opportunity to check and test the above evaluations. When we met in the French league, Dgebuadze gave me a chance to repeat the line, and I was feeling kind of obliged to let him show what he had prepared.

□ Alexander Dgebuadze

■ Mikhail Gurevich

French tt 2005

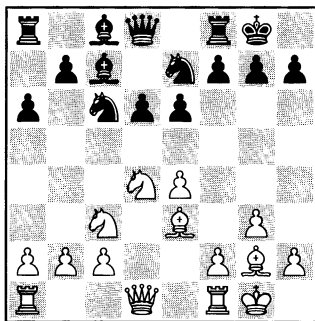
1.e4 e6 2.d3 c5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.g3 ♘d6
5.♘g2 ♘ge7 6.♘c3 ♘c7 7.♘e3

For 7.♘g5 (Dgebuadze-Gurevich, Antwerp 1999) see the previous game.

7...d6 8.d4

This time Dgebuadze makes the choice to ward central strategy.

8...cxd4 9.♘xd4 0-0 10.0-0 a6



This might be an important position for the evaluation of the whole variation. White's strategy is simple, logical and transparent. His pieces are mobilized, White has more space and a certain amount of control of the centre. With his following move my opponent connects the rooks in order to develop them along the e- and d-files.

11.♣e2

A Theoretical Novelty. It is a purely classi-

cal move, but it has its drawbacks.

● 11.♣h5 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4 e5 13.♘e3 ♘b6 14.♣fe1 ♘e6 15.♣ad1 ♣c8 16.♣d2 ♘a5 17.♣ed1 ♣c6 18.f4 f6 19.♣h4 ♘g6 20.♣h5 exf4 21.♘xf4 ♘xf4 22.gxf4 ♘b6+ 23.♣h1 ♘e3?, K.Larsen-Zagorskis, Copenhagen 1998.

● 11.♣e1 ♘xd4 12.♘xd4 e5 13.♘e3 b5 14.f4 ♘b7 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.♘c5 (Stronger is 16...♘b6!?) Magem Badals-Kengis, Liepaja 2001.

In my opinion, 11.♣e2 and 11.f4 need to be studied.

11...♘xd4 12.♘xd4 ♘c6 13.♘e3 ♘e5!?

This is the point, and, it seems to me, that my opponent missed it. After the exchange of one pair of knights White's space advantage is irrelevant, and my second knight develops quickly forward, creating the unpleasant threat of 14...♘c4. White needs to lose some time to neutralize the threat.

14.♣e2 b5

Black's initiative develops quickly and naturally. Already at this point I knew I had a good game, as Black holds the initiative.

15.a3

Black is also slightly better after 15.b3 b4 16.♘a4 (16.♘d1 a5!) 16...♘d7.

15...♘c4 16.♘c1

An unpleasant necessity in order not to give his opponent the simple advantage of the two bishops.

Thus, 16.e5 is well-met by 16...♘xe3 17.♣xe3 ♣b8.

16...♘b7 17.b3

A better chance was perhaps 17.a4 ♣d7 18.axb5 axb5 19.♣xa8 ♣xa8 20.b3 ♘e5 21.♘xb5 (or 21.♣xb5 ♣c8! 22.♣e2 ♘a6 23.♘b5 ♣d7 24.c4 ♘xb5 25.cxb5 ♣b8=) 21...♣a2 with compensation.

17...♘a5!?

Not allowing my opponent a second for relaxation.

18. ♖d1

This is passive, but the alternatives are no better:

- 18.bxc4 ♗xc3 19.♖b1 ♗c6 20.♖d3 ♗e5.
- 18.♗xb5 ♗e5! 19.♖d4 (19.b4 axb5 20.bxa5 ♖xa5) 19...♗c3 20.♗e3 ♗xa1 21.♖xa1 ♖.

18... ♗e5 19. ♗b2 ♖c7 20. ♖c1 b4!

An essential brick in Black's strategical plan. As White moves his pieces to the kingside, it's extremely important to break on the opposite side and to distract the opponent.

21. axb4 ♗xb4 22. ♗e3 a5

Intending both 23...a4, and 23...♗a6.

23. f4 ♖d7 24. ♖h1

Or 24.f5 ♗c5 (24...e5!?) 25.♖h1 ♗e5∞. Black is slightly better after 24.♖g4 ♗c3.

24... ♗a4!?

Simple and persistent. As I don't see any real threats to my king I continue my strategy. Instead 24...♗a6 25.c4 ♗c5 26.♖g4 would have handed White the initiative.

25. bxa4 ♖xa4 26. c4

Finally creating the threat of 27.♖g4.

26... ♗a3!

Trying to eliminate the 'main enemy' of my king.

27. ♖a1

Or 27.♗xa3 ♖xa3 ♖.

27... ♖fa8 28. ♗c3

But not 28.♖xa3 ♖xa3 29.♖g4 g6 30.f5 ♗e5 31.♗xe5 dxe5 32.fxe6 ♖a1 ♖.

28... ♗b4! 29. ♖xa4 ♖xa4 30. ♗a1!?

With the desperate hope to proceed with the attack. Stronger was 30.♗xb4 ♖xb4 31.♖d1 ♗c5 32.♖d2 ♖b6 33.e5 ♗xg2+ 34.♗xg2 ♗e4 35.♖d4 ♖b7, though Black clearly holds the initiative.

30... ♗c5 ♖

I enjoy the bishop's manoeuvres in this game. Each move of the bishop works as a nail in the coffin of my opponent's strategy.

31. ♗g4

Here 31.♖g4 is refuted by the elementary 31...♖xa1 32.♖xa1 ♗xe3 winning.

31... ♗a6

White's position collapses as a house of cards.

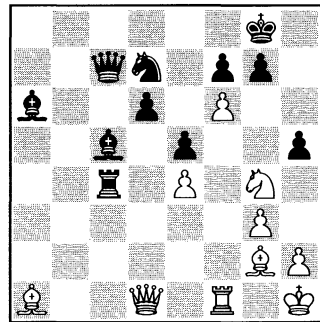
32. f5!?

The attack fails after 32.♗h6+ g6 33.♖g4+ ♖f8 34.♖g7+ ♖e7 35.f5 e5 36.f6+ ♖e8.

32... e5!

Much simpler than 32...♗xc4 33.♗h6+ g6 33...♖f8 34.♗xg7+! ♖g7 35.♖g4+ with attack) 34.♖g4+ ♖f8 35.♖g7+ (or 35.fxe6 ♗e5 36.♗xe5 dxe5 37.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 38.exf7 ♖a1+ 39.♗f1 ♖xf1+ 40.♖g2 ♖f2+) 35...♖e8 when Black is also better.

33. ♖d1 ♖xc4 34. f6 h5!



A final touch. Black gains a decisive material edge.

35. f6xg7

White's weak back rank is the problem after 35.♗h6+ g6 36.♖xh5 ♗xf6 37.♖xf6 (37.♖xh6 ♗xe4) 37...♖c1+.

35... hxg4 36. ♖xg4

Again the back rank tactics work for Black in the line 36.♖d2 ♗f6! 37.♖xf6 ♗e3! 38.♖xe3 ♖c1+ and wins.

36... ♗f6! 37. ♖h4

37.♖xf6 ♖c1+.

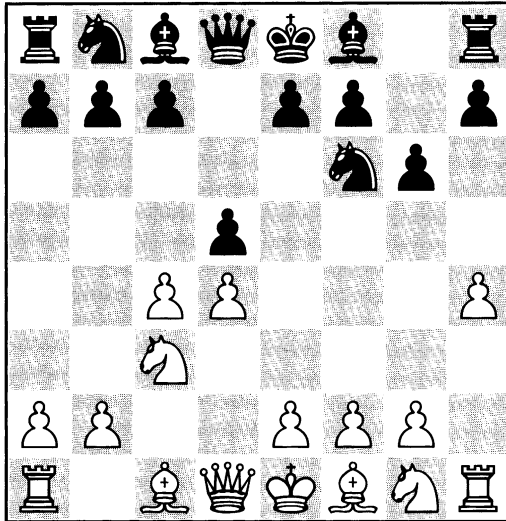
37... ♗h7 38. ♗b2 ♖c2 39. ♖b1 ♖b8

White resigned. I hope you enjoyed the game as well as I did, my dear Reader.

CHAPTER 3

Jeroen Bosch

A Flank Attack in the Grünfeld



4.h4 – Still following a central strategy

Keeping your main line repertoire against the Grünfeld up-to-date is an arduous task. Ernst Grünfeld's hypermodern weapon has evolved into one of the most respectable defences against 1.d4. Not surprisingly, the theoretical workload for both sides is wholly in line with this status. If you are looking for a weapon against the Grünfeld this SOS chapter will be of interest to you.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.h4

Why not embark on a flank attack the next time you encounter the Grünfeld? The idea of 4.h4 (apart from probing the 'weakness' g6) is that the knight on f6 cannot defend the squares d5 and h5 simultaneously. Thus after Black's most natural move 4...♗g7,

White plays 5.h5, when after 5...♗xh5, he gains an edge in the centre with 6.cxd5. Somewhat paradoxically, this simple line demonstrates that with 4.h4 White is still following a central strategy.

In another form this idea is known from a (Grünfeld) line against the English: 1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.cxd5 ♘xd5 4.♘f3 g6 5.h4!?. Here the knight has already been lured to the centre. Consequently, White plans the crude 6.h5. Two miniature wins by Jeroen Piket (both in active chess) demonstrate the dangers facing Black:

– 5...♗g7 6.h5 ♘c6 7.g3 ♗g4 8.h6 (the h-pawn is making a career for itself, Black now gives up both his bishops. He should

perhaps have opted for the simple 8...♙f6) 8...♙xc3 9.bxc3 ♟xf3 10.exf3 ♖d6 11.♙e2 0-0-0 12.♗b3 f5 13.a4 e5 14.a5 e4 15.f4 ♚f6 16.0-0 ♚g4 17.♙a3 ♗xd2? (a clear mistake in a difficult situation; 17...♗d7 was forced) 18.a6! (now that the a-pawn has also reached the sixth rank, the game is over) 18...♚a5 19.axb7+ ♜b8 20.♗b5 e3 21.♙c5! exf2+ 22.♗xf2, and Black resigned, 1-0. Piket-Shirov, Monte Carlo rapid 1998.

– 5...♚f6 (taking the assault of the h-pawn seriously) 6.d4 ♙g7 7.e4 0-0 8.♙e2 c5 9.d5 e6 10.h5! ♚hx5 11.g4 (according to Shipov White should have played 11.♚g5!?, with the better chances) 11...♚f6 12.♙g5 ♗b6 (Black could have taken advantage of White's 11th move with Shipov's 12...♗a5!) 13.♙xf6 ♙xf6 14.♗d2 ♙g7 15.0-0-0 ♚d7 16.g5 c4 17.♗h2 ♗e8 18.d6 ♗d8 19.♗f4 ♗a5 (it is fitting that White now dealt the decisive blow along the h-file) 20.♗hx7! and White won, Piket-Svidler, Internet, KasparovChess 2000.

After this brief outing into the English Opening, we will examine the virtues (and vices) of 4.h4.

Let us divide the material along thematic lines:

- I Natural development – ignoring the march of the h-pawn.
- II Prophylaxis – stopping the march of the h-pawn.
- III Acting in the centre – neutralizing the march of the h-pawn.

Section I features the 'naive' 4...♙g7. The second section examines the 'automatic' responses of the h-pawn: 4...h6 and 4...h5. Finally, all central responses are the subject of section III. Thus, Black can counterattack with 4...c5, give up the centre with 4...dxc4, or strengthen d5 with 4...c6.

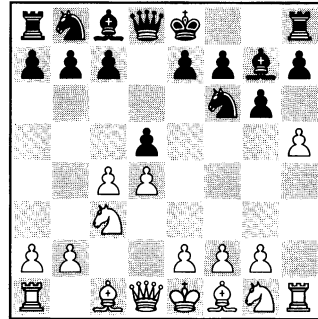
I Natural development

4...♙g7

The most natural move, but it falls right into White's main idea.

5.h5!

This is the crux. Note that 5.cxd5 ♚xd5 6.h5 c5! (Williams-Beaumont, England tt 1998) favours Black.



5...♚hx5

Considering the circumstances this is Black's best bet. With 5...0-0 Black castles into it, which surely justifies 4.h4 and 5.h5! After 6.hxg6 hxg6 the simple 7.♙h6 (Davies) gives White an attack. The ugly 5...gxh5? gives White a pleasant choice. Bosboom-Gorissen, Haarlem 2002, went: 6.cxd5 ♚xd5 7.♗hx5± ♚xc3 8.bxc3 ♚d7 9.♗b1 c5 10.♗a4 cxd4 11.cxd4 ♜f8 12.e3, and White was better. Finally, 5...dxc4 6.h6 ♙f8 7.e4 is simply disastrous for Black.

6.cxd5 ♚f6

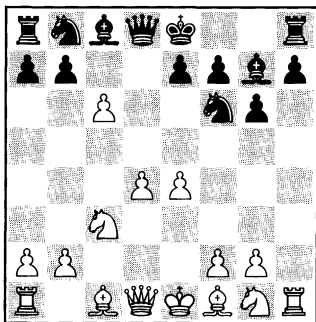
Moving the knight back into the fray. In practice Black has also attacked the centre here with his c-pawn:

– 6...c5 7.dxc5 ♗a5 8.e4 (or simply 8.♙d2 ♗xc5 9.e4) 8...♗xc5 9.♙e2?! (this allows Black's next move, simply 9.♙d2 preserves an edge) 9...♙d4!? 10.♙hx5 ♙xf2+ 11.♜f1 ♙xg1 (11...gxh5) 12.♗xg1 gxh5 13.♗hx5 ♚d7 14.♗e2 b6 15.♙e3 ♗a5 16.♚b5 ♚f6 17.d6 ♙d7 18.♚c7+ ♜d8 19.♙d4 ♗g5

20.e5 ♖c8 21.♔e3 ♜xe3 22.♙xe3 exd6
23.exd6 ♗e4♞, Sulyok-Nemeth, Hungary
1993.

– 6...c6 7.e4 (7.dxc6 ♙xd4 is about equal)
7...cxd5 (7...♗f6 8.dxc6 transposes to the
main line) 8.e5! (threatening to win the
knight. Black is now forced to a sad regroup-
ing of his troops) 8...♙f8 9.g4 ♗g7 (White
has obvious compensation for the sacrificed
pawn) 10.♙g2 e6 11.♙h6 ♗c6 12.♗ge2
♙d7 13.♔d2 f6 14.exf6 ♜xf6 15.♞h3! ♙b4
16.♞f3 ♜e7 17.♙g5 ♔d6 18.a3 ♙xc3
19.♗xc3 ♗a5 20.♔e2 ♞f8 21.♗xd5!, and
White won in Shliperman-Ady, New York
1999.

7.e4 c6 8.dxc6



8...bxc6

Black accepts a clearly inferior pawn struc-
ture because 8...♗xc6 is met by 9.d5. The
pawn sacrifice 8...0-0 9.cxh7 ♙xb7 is also
inadequate. White has a pleasant choice
between

– 10.e5 ♗d5 11.♙h6 ♙xh6 12.♞xh6 ♔b6
13.♔d2± Johnsrud-Scarani, e-mail corr.
2000, and

– 10.f3 ♗c6 11.♙e3 ♜c7 12.♙b5 ♔b6
13.♔d2 ♞f8 14.♗ge2 ♙a6, Seres-Balinov,
Budapest 1999. Now 15.d5 would have
given White a decisive edge.

9.♙e2 ♙a6 10.♗f3

White has a clear structural edge here. The
game Seres-Dembo, Budapest 2001, went:

**10...♔a5 11.0-0 0-0 12.♙g5 h6
13.♙h4 ♙xe2 14.♔xe2 ♞e8?!**

Slightly better was 14...e6 15.e5 ♗d5
16.♗e4. However, since 16...g5? is refuted
by 17.♙xg5 hxg5 18.♗fxg5 (Davies),
Black's position remains unenviable.

**15.♞ac1 ♔a6 16.♔c2 ♗bd7 17.e5
♗h7 18.e6! fxe6 19.♔xg6 ♗hf8
20.♔g3 ♔d3 21.♞fe1 ♔f5 22.♗e4
♔d5 23.b3 ♗h8 24.♔h3 ♔f5 25.♞xc6
♔xh3 26.gxh3 ♗g6 27.♙g3 ♗gf8
28.♗c5 ♗xc5 29.dxc5 ♞ed8 30.♞c7
♞ac8 31.♞xe7 ♞xc5 32.♞xa7 ♞d3
33.♙g2 ♞c2 34.♞e4 1-0**

II Prophylaxis

Black can, of course, stop the h-pawn dead
in its tracks by playing 4...h5. Similarly,
4...h6 serves the same purpose, as 5.h5 g5 fa-
vours Black. Still, these 'automatic' re-
sponses will not solve Black's opening prob-
lems.

4...h6?!

I don't like this move, although it is better
than 4...h5. The pawn on h6 is vulnerable
and provides White with an easy target. In
Chichkin-Nasikan, Kiev 1999, Black opted
for 4...h5?! Play continued: 5.♙g5 (this
demonstrates that 4...h5 is worse than 4.h4!).
Since White's bishop is now protected on
g5, Black does not have the customary
...♗e4 response) 5...dxc4 6.e4 ♙g7 7.♙xc4
(White has a superior position) 7...♗h7?!
8.♙e3± ♗c6 9.♗ge2 e5 10.d5 ♗e7 11.♙c5
b6 12.♙a3 c5? 13.dxc6 ♔xd1+ 14.♞xd1
♗xc6 15.♗b5, and White was winning.

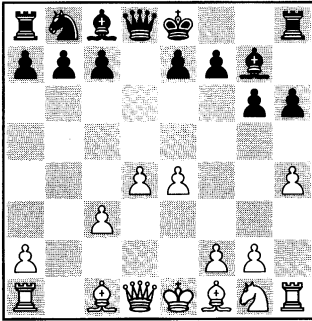
5.cxd5

Less good is 5.♗f3 ♙g7 6.♙f4 c6 7.e3 ♔b6
8.♔d2 ♗e4!, with approximate equality in
Seres-Blasko, Budapest 2001.

5...♗xd5 6.e4 ♗xc3 7.bxc3 ♙g7

A standard Grünfeld position but for the po-
sition of the h-pawns. The difference favours
White. Davies's suggestion of 8.♙e3, fol-

lowed by ♖d2, is one good set-up to take advantage of the inclusion of 4.h4 h6.



The game Seres-Nagy, Budapest 1998, went instead:

8.♖c4 c5 9.♗e2 ♘c6 10.♖e3 0-0 11.♞c1 a6

Instead of the text 11...♗a5 was better.

12.♗d2 ♖h7 13.h5 g5 14.e5! ♖h8 15.f4 f6 16.0-0 ♖g4 17.♗g3

With a clear edge for White.

17...b5 18.♖b3 ♗a5 19.exf6 exf6 20.d5 c4 21.♖c2 ♗ad8 22.♖b1 ♗e7 23.d6 ♗c8 24.♗c2 f5 25.fxg5 ♗xd6 26.♞f4

The threat is 27.♞xg4.

26...♗a4 27.♗xa4 bxa4 28.g6 ♗b5

Or 28...♖e5 29.♖d4±.

29.♞xc4 ♗xc3 30.♖h2 ♗xb1 31.♞xb1 ♞d3 32.♖f4 ♞a3 33.♞b7+- ♞xa2 34.♞cc7 ♖f3 35.♞xg7 ♞xg2+ 36.♖h3 ♞xg3+ 37.♖xg3 ♖xb7 38.♞xb7 ♖e8 39.♖xh6 a3 40.♖g7+ 1-0

III Acting in the centre

Clearly, sections I and II leave White with a pleasant opening edge. Nothing but good news for our SOS line so far! If Black is to find an adequate response to 4.h4 it will have to be in the current section. The three moves that I represent here have in common that they concentrate first and foremost on the

centre. Having lumped them together for this reason, it is only fair to add that they are also fundamentally different. Let us divide them accordingly into:

- A) 4...c5
- B) 4...dxc4
- C) 4...c6

Lines A and B are tactical in nature, whereas line C is Black's most solid option.

Variation A

So far, I have not mentioned that the most faithful adherent of 4.h4 is the Hungarian IM Lajos Seres. His games constitute the main body of this article. Seres is, however, not the inventor of 4.h4. This 'honour' goes to grandmaster Alexander Zaitsev. This player, incidentally, should not be mistaken for his namesake Igor Zaitsev, Anatoly Karpov's long-time second. Alexander Zaitsev can boast, for instance, shared 1st/2nd place in the 36th Soviet Championship of 1968 (losing the play-off for the title 2½-3½ to Lev Polugaevsky). In the stem game with 4.h4 he managed to beat no less a player than Vasily Smyslov.

Here is the stem game:

- Alexander Zaitsev
 - Vasily Smyslov
- Sochi 1963

4...c5 5.cxd5

Here 5.dxc5 is best. Note that 5.h5? is bad due to 5...cxd4.

5...♗xd5 6.dxc5!?

6.h5 ♖g7 7.hxg6 hxg6 8.♞xh8+ ♖xh8±.

6...♗xc3 7.♗xd8+ ♖xd8 8.bxc3 ♖g7

Black appears to have no problems in this ending. All the more interesting that Zaitsev is able to outplay his famous opponent in his own territory.

9.♔d2 ♕f5

Stronger is 9...♘a6 10.♙a3 (10.c6 ♘c5 – Davies – is clearly in Black’s favour) 10...♙f5, and if now 11.f3 then 11...♙h6+ 12.e3 ♘c7 13.♙xa6 ♖ad8+ 14.♗e1 bxa6.

10.f3! ♘d7

Better is 10...♙h6+ 11.♔d1 ♕xc1 12.♘xc1 ♘c7.

11.e4 ♙e6 12.c6!

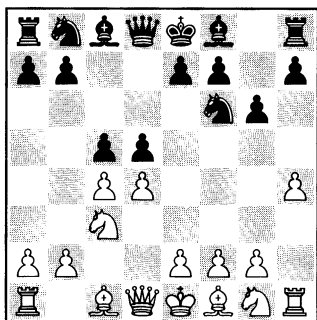
Much better than 12.♙a3 ♖c8♠.

12...bxc6 13.♘e2 ♙c4 14.♘c2 ♘c7 15.h5 e5?! 16.♙e3 ♙e6 17.♘c1 a5 18.♘b3 f5 19.♘d2 f4 20.♙f2 g5 21.♙c4 ♖he8 22.♙xe6 ♖xe6 23.♘c4 ♙f8 24.♖hd1 ♖b8 25.♘xa5 ♖h6 26.♖d2 ♖hx5 27.♖ad1 ♘f6 28.♘c4 c5 29.♘xe5 g4 30.♘f7 gxf3 31.gxf3 ♖h2 32.e5 ♘d5 33.♖xd5 ♖xf2+ 34.♔d3 ♖xf3+ 35.♘c4 ♖e3 36.♖d7+ ♘c6 37.♘d8+ ♖xd8 38.♖xd8 ♖e4+ 39.♘b3 ♙e7 40.♖c8+ ♘b7 41.♖e8 ♙h4 42.♖d7+ ♘c6 43.♖xh7 f3 44.c4 1-0

An impressive win that had little to do with the opening, though. Clearly, White must improve upon Zaitsev’s 5.cxd5.

4...c5

Increasing the tension in the centre, and thereby giving White no time for 5.h5.

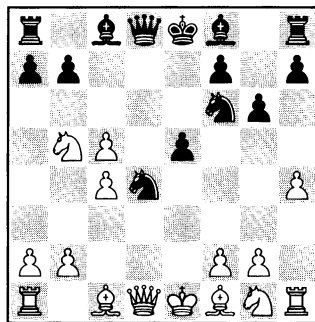


5.dxc5

This is the only serious test of Black’s idea.

5...♙g7

A major alternative is 5...d4, when play sharpens considerably: 6.♘b5 ♘c6 7.e3 (or 7.♘f3 e5 8.♙g5 ♙e7) 7...e5 8.exd4 ♘xd4 (but not 8...exd4 9.♙f4).



A tense situation in which White has tried the following moves:

● 9.♘f3?! (this is certainly not the correct choice) 9...♙xc5 10.♘bxd4 exd4 11.♙d3 ♙g4 12.♙g5 ♖e7+ 13.♗f1 h6 14.♙f4 ♘h5 15.♙d2 ♗f8, and Black was better in Porat-Jerez, Andorra 2001.

● 9.♘xd4 exd4 10.♙d3 ♙g7 11.♙f4 0-0 12.♘f3 ♖e8+ 13.♗f1 ♙g4 14.♖c2 ♘h5 15.♙d6 ♙xf3 16.gxf3 ♙e5 with unclear play in Gozzoli-Van der Weide, La Fere 2004.

● 9.b4!? a5 10.♙g5 ♙e7 11.♘xd4 (11.♘f3 was my recommendation in New In Chess Magazine 2004/2) 11...exd4 12.b5 h6 13.♙f4 ♙xc5 14.♙d3 ♙b4+ 15.♗f1 ♙g4 16.f3 ♙e6 17.♘e2 and both sides had their chances in Cebalo-Sebenik, Pula 2004.

6.cxd5 ♖a5

This was Black’s idea, but his initiative is easily stymied.

7.♙d2 ♖xc5 8.e4 0-0 9.♙e2

Preventing both ♘g4 and ♙g4. Black does not have enough compensation for the pawn. The game Seres-Orso, Hungary 1997, continued:

9...e6 10.♖c1! ♘a6 11.♘h3!? exd5

12.e5!? 12.♟xd5. 12...♞d7 13.♞f4
 ♟xe5 14.♞cxd5 Black's queen is in major trouble. 14...♞d4 14...♞d6 15.♟xa6!.
 15.♞b3 ♞g4 16.♞g3 ♞e8 17.♟c3
 ♞c4 18.0-0!+- ♞xe2 19.♟xg7 ♞c2
 20.♟c3 ♞xc1 21.♞xc1 h5 22.f3
 22.♟xg6! fxg6 23.♞d6 and wins.
 22...♞c5+ 23.♟h1 ♟e3 24.♟xe3
 ♞xe3 25.♞e1 Black resigned, for if the queen moves, White mates with ♞e8-h8.

Variation B

Black releases the central tension, thereby relieving his knight of the task of defending d5. Play resembles the Queen's Gambit Accepted with the moves g6 and h4 thrown in. Tactics reign supreme in this line.

4...dxc4 5.e4 c5

White gains the initiative after 5...♞c6 6.d5
 ♟e5 7.♞d4 ♟d3+ 8.♟xd3 cxd3 9.h5
 Cordes-Karelin, e-mail corr. 2000.

6.d5 b5

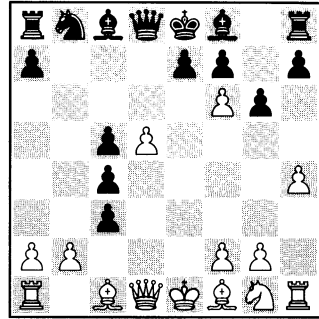
Otherwise White would simply retrieve the pawn with excellent play.

7.e5 b4 8.exf6

Here 8.♞a4 ♟xd5 9.♟xc4 yields some compensation for the pawn. Bosboom-Goor-machtigh, Haarlem 1998, continued: 9...e6
 10.♟g5 ♞c7 (10...♟e7 11.♟xc5) 11.♟f3
 ♟b7 12.h5 ♞g8 13.h6 ♟d7 14.0-0!?, and White won.

8...bxc3

This position should be compared to a well-known line from the Queen's Gambit Accepted: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e4 c5 4.d5
 ♟f6 5.♟c3 b5 6.e5 b4 7.exf6 bxc3. In the QGA White now takes back on c3. In our Grünfeld SOS he can play more aggressively. The inclusion of h2-h4 and g7-g6 generally favours White. He can probe Black's kingside with h5 (although this is a double-edged sword, of course), while the main a1-h8 diagonal is also weakened because of g6.

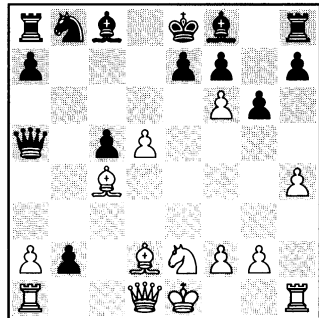


9.♟xc4

What happens if White takes back on c3? After 9.bxc3 ♟d7 it looks as if White can advantageously play 10.h5. However, Leviczki-Varadi, Szombathely 2003, went: 10...♟b6! 11.hxg6 fxg6 12.♟xc4 exf6 (even better than 12...♟xc4 13.♞a4+ ♟f7 14.♞xc4 exf6) 13.♟d3 f5! 14.c4 ♟g7 15.♞b1 0-0 16.♟e2 ♟a6 17.♞c2 ♞d6.

9...♟d7

The most natural reply; Black aims to take back on f6 with the knight. After 10.fxe7 ♞xe7+ he gains time. No good is 9...cxb2 10.♟xb2±. There is, however, a sharp alternative available in the form of 9...♞a5!?. White is forced to sacrifice material with 10.♟e2!? cxb2+ 11.♟d2



11...♞b6? (now White gets a virtually winning position for nothing. Still, after the crit-

ical 11...bxa1 ♖ 12. ♖xa1 ♜b6 13.fxe7 f6 14.exf8 ♖+ ♜xf8 15.0-0 White has huge compensation for the exchange) 12. ♜b1 exf6 (or 12...♙f5 13. ♖a4+ ♘d7 14.♙b5!) 13. ♖a4+ ♘d7 (13...♙d7 14. ♖a3) 14. ♜h3! h5? 15. ♜b3 ♖c7 16.d6 ♙xd6 17.♙a5 ♜b8 18. ♜1xb2, 1-0 Cordes-Greger, Germany 2000.

10. ♖a4!

Not allowing Black to take back on f6 with the knight.

10... ♖b6 11.bxc3 ♖xf6 12. ♘e2 ♙g7 13. ♙b5

This move prevents Black from castling. White is better and won convincingly in Seres-Pribyl, Liechtenstein 2000:

13...a6 14. ♙e3 ♜b8 15. ♙c6 ♖f5 16.0-0

Black is unable to complete his development and is therefore fighting a lost cause.

16... ♖d3

Not 16...0-0? as 17. ♘g3 wins on the spot.

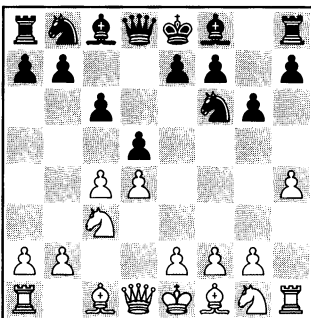
17. ♜fe1 ♜b2 18. ♘f4 ♖xc3 19. ♜ac1 ♖b4 20. ♙xc5 ♖xa4 21. ♙xa4 e5

Instead of resigning.

22.dxe6 fxe6 23. ♜xe6+ ♙f7 24. ♜e7+ ♙f6 25. ♙xd7 ♙xd7 26. ♜xd7 ♙h6 27. ♙d4+ 1-0

Variation C

4...c6



This is Black's most solid option. The move is perhaps not in keeping with the Grünfeld player's customary active temperament, though. Yet this set-up, similar to the Schlechter Variation, is not without logic. The move 4.h4 was aimed at the knight's inability to defend both squares d5 and h5. With 4...c6 Black overprotects d5, so that 5.h5 is no longer a threat. The pawn on h4 looks slightly awkward now.

5.cxd5

Clarifying the situation in the centre. No good is 5. ♙f4 which is solidly met by 5...dxc4, with advantage.

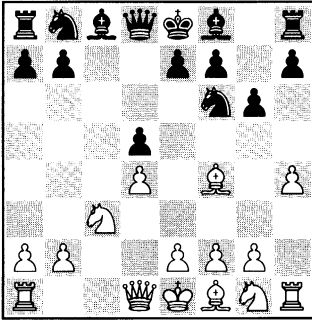
Practice has also seen 5.e3 ♙g7 6. ♙d2 0-0 7. ♜c1 when Black has chosen the Schlechter set-up. White has yet to develop his kingside. He deliberately waits, though: ♘f3 would allow ...♙g4, while ♙e2/d3 is met by ...dc4. Kruppa-Aronian, Linares 1998, saw: 7...♘bd7?! (this is a mistake, as the knight is misplaced after the exchange on d5 – it then belongs on c6. There are several playable alternatives: 7...♙f5, 7...♙e6 and 7...a6 spring to mind) 8.cxd5! cxd5 9. ♘f3 a6 10. ♖b3 e6 11. a4 ♜e8 12. ♙e2±.

Also interesting is 5. ♙g5 ♙g7 6. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 7.cxd5 cxd5 8.e3 ♘c6 9.h5 g5 10.h6 e6 and in Clavierie-Goloschapov, Le Touquet 2004, a draw was agreed. Apparently, the stronger (second) player did not trust his position here.

5...cxd5 6. ♙f4

Controlling the e5 square, which is important, as the following game demonstrates: 6. ♙g5 ♙g7 7.e3 ♘c6 8. ♙d3 0-0 9. ♘ge2 e5 10.dxe5 ♘xe5 11. ♙c2 ♙e6 12. ♘d4 ♜c8 13. ♜b1 a6 14. ♖e2 b5 15. ♘xe6 fxe6 16.0-0 ♖c7 and in Parker-Webb, England 2001, a draw was agreed, but Black is slightly better. Note that we have a Slav Exchange here with h4 and g6 thrown in. A set-up with g6 is not to be recommended in the Slav Exchange. On the other hand, after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6

3.cxd5 cxd5 4.♖c3 ♘f6 5.♙f4 g6?! nobody would play 6.h4?! either. On the whole, White seems to be slightly better.



6...♙g7

To get a feel for the resulting positions, here are some other practical examples:

– 6...a6 7.e3 ♙g7 8.♙e2 (hoping to play h5 at some point) 8...h5?! 9.♘f3 ♘c6 10.♘e5 (now the position has stabilized. White has a favourable Slav Exchange) 10...0-0 11.0-0 ♙f5 12.♖b3 ♘a5 13.♖b4 ♘e4 14.♘xe4 ♙xe4 15.♞fc1± ♙xe5 16.dxe5 b5 17.a4 bxa4 18.♞xa4 ♘c4 19.b3 ♘b2 20.♞xa6 ♞xa6 21.♙xa6 ♘d3 22.♙xd3 ♙xd3 23.e6! f6 24.♞c7 ♞e8 25.♞b7 ♙a6 26.♞b8 ♙c8 27.♖c5 ♞f8 28.b4 1-0 Seres-Farkas, Szeged 1998.

– 6...♘c6 7.♘f3 ♙g7 8.e3 0-0 9.♘e5 ♖b6 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♖d2 ♞e8 12.♙e2 h6 13.♘a4 ♖b7 14.♘c5 ♖b6 15.♞c1 ♘d7 16.♘xd7 ♙xd7 17.0-0 e5 18.♙xe5 ♙xe5 19.dxe5 ♞xe5 20.♞fd1 ♞e4 21.g3 ♙g4 22.♙xg4 ♙xg4 23.b4± Krzyzanowski-Ros, e-mail corr. 2000.

– 6...♘c6 7.e3 a6 8.♙e2 ♙g7 9.h5 ♘e4 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♞xh8+ ♙xh8 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♖c2 ♖a5+ 14.♙f1 ♙e6 15.♖xe4 ♙xa2 16.♘f3 ♙d5 17.♞xa5 ♙xe4 18.♞c5 ♞c8 19.♘d2 ♙f5 20.♙f3 ♘d8 21.♞c7 ♞xc7 22.♙xc7 b5 23.♘b3± Kahn-Szeberenyi, Budapest 2000.

7.e3 0-0

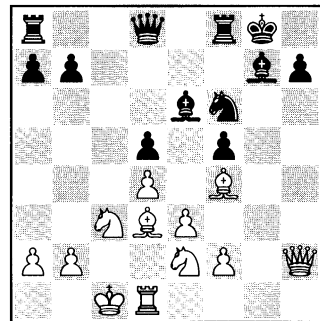
7...♘c6 8.h5 (this looks a bit drastic. The modest 8.♙e2 threatens h5 at some point. White has the slightly better chances) 8...0-0 (why not 8...♘h5? Was White really planning 9.♞xh5 gxh5 10.♖xh5?) 9.hxg6 hxg6 10.♘f3 ♖b6 and Black is just in time to keep White busy; play is about equal, Bosboom-I.Sokolov, Leeuwarden 1997.

8.h5!

Black must have underestimated this exchange sacrifice. With the king on g8 – cf. Bosboom-I.Sokolov – White’s compensation is obvious.

8...♘h5 9.♞xh5 gxh5 10.♖xh5 f5 11.♙d3 e6 12.g4 ♘d7 13.gxf5 ♘f6 14.♖h2 exf5 15.♘ge2 ♙e6 16.0-0

White has excellent compensation for the exchange



16...♞f7 17.♞g1 ♞c8 18.f3 ♙h8 19.♙b1 ♞c6 20.♞h1 ♖g8 21.♘b5 Threatening both 22.♘d6 and 22.♘xa7.

21...♙e8 22.♘xa7 ♞b6 23.♘b5 ♙f6 24.♘bc3 ♞g7 25.♘a4 ♞c6 26.♘c5 ♙c8 27.♘g3 b6 28.♙b5!

Winning material.

28...bxc5 29.♙xc6 cxd4 30.♙xe8 dxe3

Black is trying to confuse the issue, but is getting nowhere.

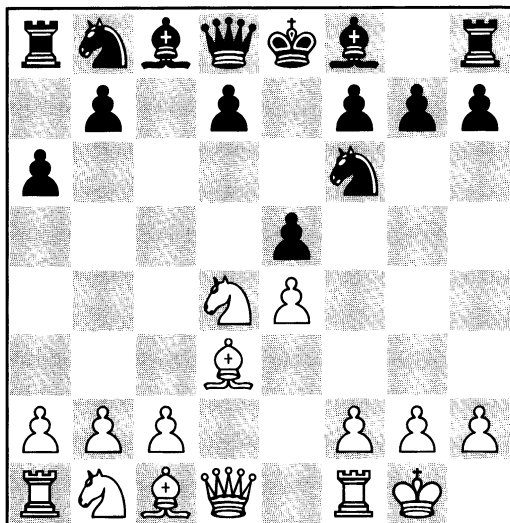
31.♙b5 d4 32.♘h5 ♞g2 33.♙e5!

And after this neat finish Black resigned. Cebalo-Brkic, Nova Gorica 2005.

CHAPTER 4

Oleg Romanishin

Catch-as-catch-Kan?



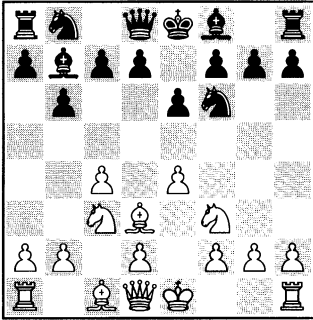
Sicilian Kan Variation with 6...e6-e5!?

Home preparation is becoming increasingly more important, as our rate of play is getting faster and faster. In the old days, facing a novelty during the game, you could just spend some time to find, if not the best, than at least a reasonable continuation. These days, you will have to react almost immediately, otherwise you'll be under time pressure until the end of the game. In my opinion this is an important argument against the new time control. The creative side of chess suffers too much at the expense of this strange wish to have chess players play with their 'hands' rather than with their heads. Indeed, even in the games of top

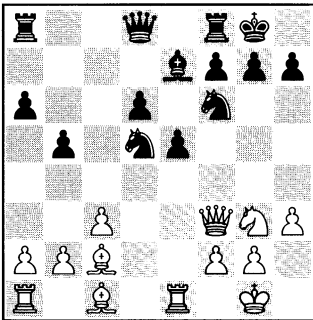
players, a lot of mistakes occur – one need only examine the games from the 2004 FIDE World Championship. When a mistake is the result of strong and interesting play by one of the players, a so-called 'forced error', then there is no problem. But mostly these mistakes were merely the logical consequences of the new regulations. If you want to profit from this aspect of modern chess, then it is very useful to surprise your opponent with an unexpected manoeuvre, and better still, with some sharp variations. Even if the complications are slightly dubious: there is every chance of success as long as your opponent lacks the time to calculate

deeply! Of course, objectively bad variations can never be recommended.

In the Soviet Championship of 1975 I managed to surprise two famous grandmasters: Tigran Petrosian with 1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 b6 4.e4 ♖b7 5.♗d3!?!N



and Efim Geller with a pawn sacrifice after 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♖b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.d4 ♗g4 10.d5 ♘a5 11.♗c2 c6 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♞xf3 cxd5 14.exd5 ♘c4 15.♘d2 ♘b6 16.♘f1! ♘bxd5 17.♘g3



winning both games. Later Tigran Petrosian said to me: ‘You are lucky, to have shot two novelties in one tournament. Nevertheless, the event doesn’t consist of those two games, but of the other fifteen’ (the Soviet Championships were mostly played with eighteen participants).

The move 6...e6-e5!? in the Sicilian Kan Variation is another way to start a psychological fight. Sometimes it is very efficient to radically change the course of play – avoiding your opponent’s preparation and thwarting his expectations. Of course, White can steer the game into a well-known line from the Najdorf Variation with 7.♘b3 d6 8.♘c3 ♗e7 9.♗e2. However, there won’t be all that many players ready to give back a tempo. On the other hand, White must realize that with a bishop on d3 he does not have enough control over the d5- and g4-squares. Nevertheless, it is clear that transferring the game to the 6.♗e2 line in the Najdorf is not the critical test of this variation. So after, 6...e5 White should look for other possibilities.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 a6 5.♗d3 ♘f6 6.0-0 e5!?

This move looks a bit strange and leads to positions that are not typical for the Paulsen/Kan Variation. It was, perhaps for the first time, played in the game Fedorowicz-Dorfman, New York Open 1989, which went: 7.♘f3 d6 8.♘c3 ♗e7 9.a4 b6 10.♘d2 0-0 11.♘c4.

I’ve played several games with this system, and I’ll mention them with some short analyses. White has several options after the audacious 6...e5:

- A) 7.♘f5
- B) 7.♘e2
- C) 7.♘f3
- D) 7.♘b3
- E) 7.♗g5

Variation A

7.♘f5?!

Hardly critical, Black gets to play both ...e5 and ...d5.

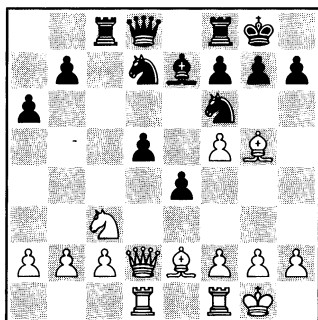
7...d5 8.♗g5

Of course not 8.exd5? e4.

8...♗xf5 9.exf5 e4

White would answer 9...♙e7 with 10.c4, when 10...e4 is well-met by 11.♙c2.

10.♙e2 ♙e7 11.♘c3 ♘bd7 12.♖d2 0-0 13.♞ad1 ♞c8



With more or less equal chances.

Variation B

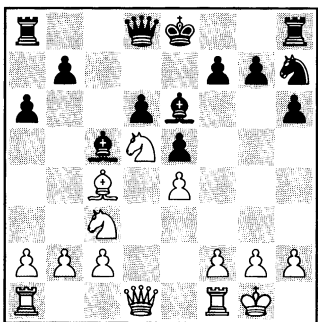
7.♘e2 ♙c5

Developing the bishop outside the pawn-chain.

8.♙g5 d6 9.♘bc3 ♘bd7 10.♘d5 h6 11.♙xf6 ♘xf6 12.♙ec3

This is the point of White's 7th move – he gains control over the d5-square.

12...♙e6 13.♙c4 ♘h7!?



This odd move is in fact a nice strategic manoeuvre, which leaves White with two knights for only one square.

14.♖d3 0-0 15.♞ad1 ♞c8

Ipavec-Romanishin, Nova Gorica 1999.

Variation C

7.♘f3 ♘c6

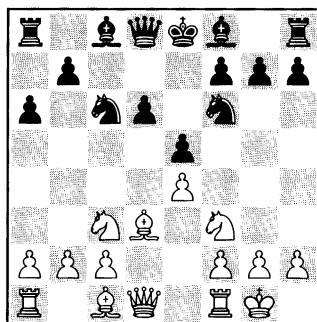
Here 7...d6?! 8.c4 is preferable for White.

C1) 8.♘c3

C2) 8.c4

Variation C1

8.♘c3 d6



Black has a decent position, as is demonstrated by the next two lines:

● 9.♘d5 ♘xd5 10.exd5 ♙e7 11.c4 g6 looks OK for Black. A playable alternative is 11...♘g6.

● 9.♙g5 ♙e7 10.♙xf6 ♙xf6 11.♘d5 0-0 12.c3 ♙e6 13.♙c4 ♞c8 14.♖d3 ♘a5 15.♙b3 ♙g5 16.♞ad1 ♙h6 17.♖e2 ♙h8 18.♙c2 ♘c4 19.♙b3 ♘a5 20.♙c2 ♘c4 21.♙b3

Play is about equal here. I now played somewhat inaccurately:

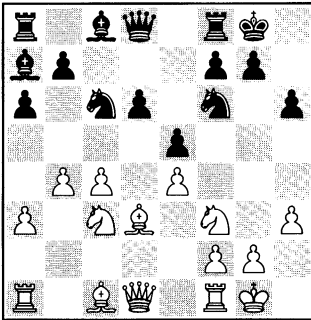
21...b5 22.a4 f5 23.exf5 ♙xf5 24.axb5 axb5 25.♙c2± Kutuzovic-Romanishin, Pula 1998.

Variation C2

8.c4 ♙c5 9.♘c3 d6 10.h3 h6

Both sides have prevented the pinning of their knights.

11.a3 0-0 12.b4 ♖a7



Black should be fine. Thus, 13.♖e2 may be answered by both 13...♗h5!? and by 13...♗d4 14.♗xd4 exd4 15.♗d5 ♖e6. While, 13.♞e1 presents no problems for the second player after 13...♖e6 14.♖e3 ♖xe3 15.♞xe3 ♗d4.

Variation D

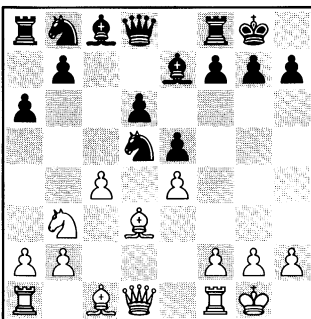
7.♗b3 d6

- D1) 8.c4
- D2) 8.♗c3

Variation D1

8.c4 ♖e7 9.♗c3 0-0 10.♗d5 ♗xd5

It was more flexible not to open the c-line and to keep the position closed with 10...♗bd7 11. ♖e3 a5.



11.exd5?

From time to time the Computer makes such stupid moves. After 11.cxd5 ♗d7 (11...f5 12.exf5 ♖xf5 13.♖xf5 ♞xf5 14.♗d2 ♗d7 15.♗e4 is simply better for White) 12.♖e3 ♖g5 13.♖d2 ♖xe3 14.♖xe3 a5 Black should keep the position.

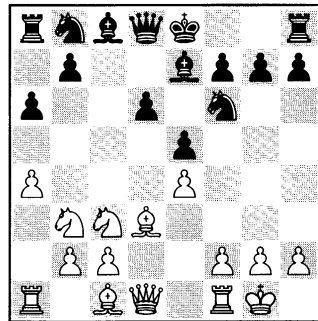
11...f5 12.♖d2 a5 13.a4 b6 14.♖c2 ♗a6 15.♖e2 ♖f6

PConNers (computer)-Romanishin, Lippstadt 1999.

Variation D1

8.♗c3 ♖e7 9.a4

Like I mentioned above, White can simply transfer to a well-known Najdorf line here with 9.♖e2, but – and here is the catch – who is going to throw away a tempo like that?



This position occurred twice in my own practice.

● 9...b6 10.♖g5 ♗bd7 11.♗d2 ♗c5?! 12.♖xf6 ♖xf6 13.♗c4 ♖b7

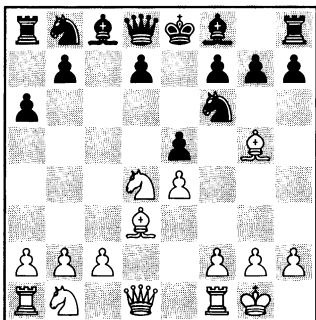
And now White withdrew his bishop: 14.♖e2

With a slight edge in Herrera-Romanishin, Linares 1999.

● 9...♖e6 10.♖e3 ♗c6 11.♗d2 ♞c8 12.♖c4 0-0 13.♖g5 ♗b4 14.♖xf6 ♖xf6 15.♗d5 ♗xd5 16.♖xd5 ♖xd5 17.exd5 ♖g5 18.♗f3 f5

And Black was slightly better in the game McShane-Romanishin, Lippstadt 1999.

Variation E
7. ♖g5!?



This brilliant move was invented by the British grandmaster Peter Wells. Perhaps, it the most promising, and certainly the most dangerous, continuation. Let us first investigate the dangers that Black is running here by examining two sample lines:

– 7...exd4?! 8.e5 ♖a5 9.♙d2 followed by 10.exf6 gives White excellent attacking chances.

– 7...d6?! 8.♘f5 ♙xf5 9.♙xf6! gxf6 10.exf5 d5 11.c4 dxc4 12.♙xc4 ♖xd1 13.♙xd1 ♘c6 14.♘c3 ♙e7 15.♙d5 ♙b8 16.♙xc6+ bxc6 17.♘a4± was the stem game Wells-Romanishin, Berlin 1999. The game ended in a draw, but White has a considerable positional advantage at this stage.

After 7. ♖g5 Black's two main options are:

- E1) 7...h6
- E2) 7...d5

Variation E1

7...h6!? 8. ♙xf6 ♖xf6 9. ♘f5

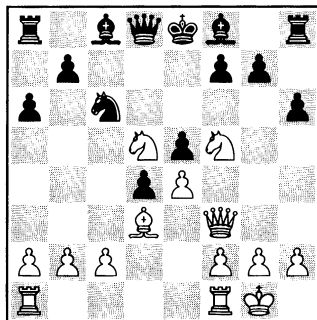
After 9. ♘f3 ♙c5 10. ♘c3 d6 11. ♘d5 ♖d8 12. ♘h4!?

0-0 13. ♘f5 ♙xf5 14. exf5 ♘d7 Black has an equal game.

9...d5 10. ♘c3 d4 11. ♘d5 ♖d8 12. ♖f3 ♘c6

If Black plays the immediate 12...g6 White

has the retort 13. ♖g3! planning 13... ♘c6 14. ♘xd4! with a clear edge.



In this complex position White has two options:

● 13.c3 g6 14. ♘xd4 exd4 15. ♘f6+ ♙e7 16. ♘d5+ to repeat the moves.

● 13. ♙c4 ♙e6

Of course not 13...g6? 14. ♘g3 ♙g7 15. ♘b6. The move 13... ♘a5 is simply answered by 14. ♙b3.

14. ♖g3 g6 15. ♘d4

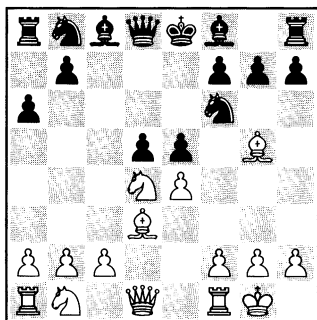
Dubious is 15.f4 gf5 16.fe5 ♖g5 (or first 16...f4) 17. ♘c7 ♙d8.

15...ed4 16. ♘c7 ♙d7 17. ♙e6 fe6 18. ♘a8 ♖a8

And Black is OK in this sharp position.

Variation E2

7...d5



8. ♖f3

Best, by attacking e5 White keeps the initiative. Black, however, is now able to transfer the game into a sharp 'ending'.

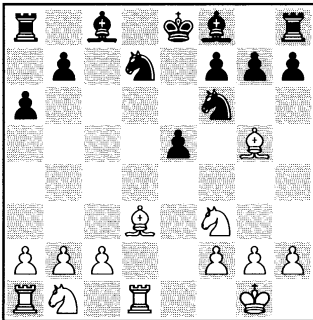
8... dxe4

No good is 8... ♖c6? 9. exd5 ♜xd5 10. ♖xf6 gxf6 11. c4! ♜d8 12. ♖c3 f5 13. ♜e2 ♖g7 14. ♜ad1 when White has a dangerous initiative.

9. ♖xe4 ♜xd1 10. ♜xd1 ♖bd7!?

The text is better than 10... ♖e7 11. ♖xf6 ♖xf6 12. ♖c3 ♖d7 13. ♖d5 ♖d8 14. c4 0-0 15. b4 f5 16. ♖c2 and White keeps a slight advantage.

After 10... ♖bd7 Black intends to counter 11. ♖f5 by 11... ♖b6! 12. ♖xc8 ♜xc8 13. ♖xe5 (or 13. ♖c3 ♖fd7) 13... ♜xc2 with adequate counterplay. Therefore White continues **11. ♖d3**



- E21) 11... h6!?
- E22) 11... ♖d5!?

Variation E21

11... h6!? 12. ♖h4

Alternatively, 12. ♖xf6 gxf6 13. ♖c3 ♖b6 14. ♖h4 is well-met by 14... ♖b4!, intending 15. ♖e4 ♖xc3 16. bxc3 ♖a4!.

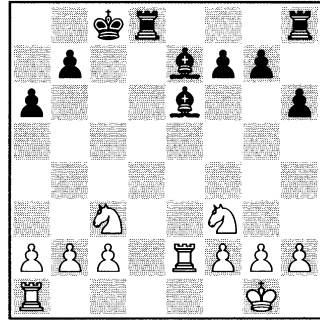
12... e4 13. ♜e1 ♖e7

Don't fall for 13... g5? 14. ♖g3 ♖e7 15. ♖c3 exd3 16. ♖d6.

14. ♖xf6

And here White can take a wrong turn with 14. ♖xe4? g5 15. ♖g3 ♖xe4 16. ♜xe4 f5.

14... ♖xf6 15. ♖xe4 ♖xe4 16. ♜xe4 ♖f5 17. ♜e2 ♖e6 18. ♖c3 0-0-0



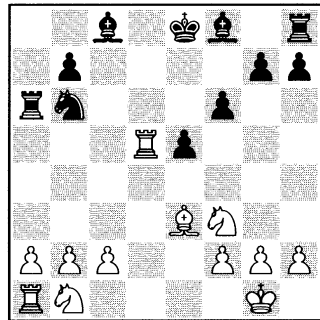
With good compensation due to the pair of bishops.

Variation E22

11... ♖d5!?

Offering a pawn.

12. ♖xa6 ♜xa6 13. ♜xd5 f6 14. ♖e3 ♖b6



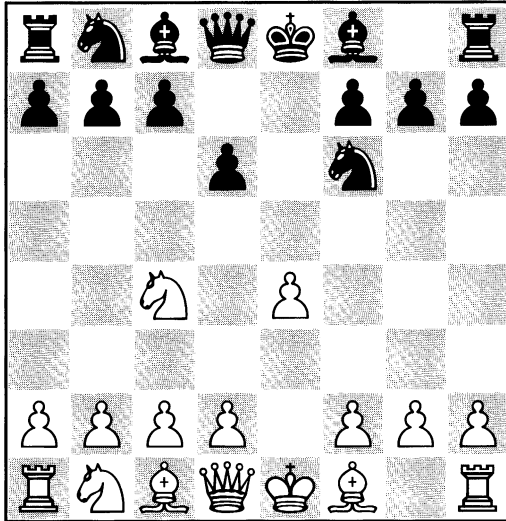
Black has compensation for the pawn as the following lines should prove:

- 15. ♖d1 ♖f5 16. c3 ♖c4 17. ♖c1 ♖xb1 18. ♜xb1 ♜xa2=.
- 15. ♜b5 ♖c4 16. ♖bd2 (16. ♖c3 ♜c6) 16... ♖xe3 17. fxe3 ♜c6 18. c4 b6.
- 15. ♖xb6 ♜xb6 16. b3.

CHAPTER 5

David Navara

The Paulsen Attack in the Petroff



Play 4. ♖c4!? en route to e3

Introduction

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♙xe5 d6 4.♘c4

According to my database, Louis Paulsen was the first player who played this line. He played it twice in 1887. Let us start with comparing the surprising knight move with the familiar 4.♘f3. White's knight is exposed on c4, so subsequently White often has to play ♘e3. Surprisingly, the knight might be very well-placed here. It attacks the d5-pawn, especially in combination with ♙d3 and c4. In comparison to the classical variations, the pieces of both sides are in worse places. Clearly, the positions that arise from Paulsen's Variation are far more unusual. To be honest, objectively I think that 4.♘c4 allows Black to

equalize at some point. However, let us not forget that in the main line White must make a big effort to reach a slightly better position. It is for this reason that I employed this variation against GM Alexandra Kosteniuk. She reacted well and reached equality in the early stage of the game. A few months later, GM Shirov played the Petroff defence against me. He told me he was looking forward to meeting 4.♘c4. Be that as it may, let's look at (and play) Paulsen's 4.♘c4.

Naturally, the move

4...♙xe4

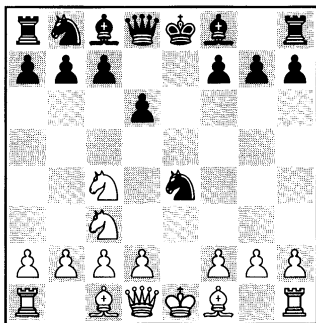
is practically forced, as 4...♞e7 5.♘e3 ♘xe4 6.d4 is advantageous for White. Now White has three normal continuations:

- 5.♘c3
- 5.d4 d5 6.♗e3
- 5.♖e2

Other moves are not very good, e.g. 5.d3 ♘f6 6.d4 d5 7.♗e5 is a transposition into an exchange variation of the French Defence. 7.♗e3 does not seem very dangerous, either. In my opinion, the black knight is more vulnerable on e4. So more logical is 5.♗e3, when 5...d5 (5...g6=) 6.d4 is a mere transposition, whereas 6.♗e2 ♗e6 is too passive.

Old Main Line

- 1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗f6 3.♗xe5 d6 4.♗c4 ♗xe4 5.♗c3



This move caused a revival of this variation in the 1990s. However, this line is not very dangerous for Black.

5...♗xc3

Black has satisfactory results with 5...♗f6 (I find this retreat a bit strange, but the knight on c4 is not placed ideally) 6.d4 ♗e7 (6...d5 7.♗e5± looks like a strange version of the Exchange Variation of the French Defence. White's chances are only slightly better) 7.♗e2 (7.♗d3 ♗c6 8.d5 ♗e5 9.♗xe5 dxe5 10.0-0 0-0 11.♞e1 ♗d7 12.♗f5 ♗b6 13.♗xc8 was played in a game Khairullin-Bezgodov. According to Bezgodov, both ♞xc8 and ♞xc8 should be sufficient for equality as Black has enough compensation for the pawn after 14.♞xe5 ♗f6) 7...0-0

8.0-0 d5 9.♗e5 (9.♗e3 ♗e6 followed by c5 is OK for Black) 9...♗f5 with equal play.

6.bxc3

The alternative is 6.dxc3 d5 7.♗e3, when after 7...c6 8.♖d4! the lines fork:

- Black's queen would be misplaced after 8...♖b6 9.♖f4.

- 8...♗d7 9.c4! (9.♗d3 ♖f6!?)=) 9...♖f6 10.♖xf6 ♗xf6 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.c3 (12.♗b5+ ♗d7 13.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 14.0-0 ♗c5 and the white knight is misplaced). I do not know whether White objectively stands a bit better or not, but 12...♗c5 13.♗c2 ♗f5 14.♗e3 is preferable for White.

- 8...♗e6 9.f4 (otherwise would Black play ♗d7) 9...f6 10.c4 c5 (10...dxc4 11.♖e4 ♖e7 12.♗xc4 ♗xc4 13.♖xc4 ♖b4+ 14.♗d2±) 11.♖d3 d4 12.♖e4 ♖e7 13.♗d5 ♗xd5 14.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 (14...♗xe7!? 15.cxd5 ♗d6 16.g3 ♗d7 17.c4 f5=) 15.cxd5 ♗d7 16.c4, Sulskis-Zulfugarli, Bydgoszcz 1999, seems to be equal.

Instead of 7...c6 Black can also play 7...♗e6!?, as the game is equal after both 8.♗d3 ♗c5, and 8.♖h5 ♖d6 9.♗d2 ♗d7 10.0-0-0 0-0-0, Benjamin-Lev, London 1987.

6...d5 7.♗e3 c6

This move, which prepares 8...♗d6, seems to be the best reaction to White's set-up.

8.d4 ♗d7

After 8...♗d6 9.♗d3 (9.c4 dxc4 10.♗xc4 0-0 11.0-0) 9...0-0 10.0-0 f5 11.f4 ♗e6 Black has equalized. In Mochna-Sudakova, St Petersburg 2002, White continued 12.g4?!, but Black was better after 12...fxg4 13.f5 ♖h4 14.♗xg4 ♗f7 15.♗f4 ♗xf4 16.♞xf4 ♖g5 17.♖f1 ♗d7 (17...h5 18.h4!).

9.♗d3 ♗f6 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♗f5 ♗xf5 12.♗xf5 0-0

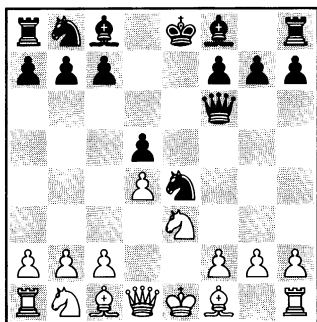
White has the bishop pair, but his pawn structure gives Black enough counter-chances, Velickovic-Mikhalchishin, Cetinje 1992.

Paulsen's idea

1.e4 e5 2.♟f3 ♟f6 3.♞xe5 d6 4.♞c4
♞xe4 5.d4 d5 6.♞e3

This is Paulsen's idea. GM Smagin played it until 1990.

6...♞f6



We will treat this as the main line, because Black has terrible results with many of the normal moves, including 6...♞e6, 6...♞e7 and so on. Let us investigate, for, objectively, they cannot be all that bad:

● 6...♞e6 7.♞d3 ♞d6, with two options.

– 8.c4 ♞b4+?! (8...c6 9.♞b3 ♞c7=) 9.♟f1! 0-0? (9...c6 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♞xe4 dxe4 12.d5 ♞d7 13.♞d4 and the arising complications seem to be in White's favour) 10.a3 ♞e7 11.cxd5 ♞xd5 12.♞xd5 ♞xd5 13.♞e2+- ♞c6 14.♞xe4 ♞xc1+ 15.♟e2 ♞xb2+ 16.♞d2 f5 (16...g6 17.♞hb1) 17.♞xe7 ♞c6.

– 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4 c6 10.♞c3 (10.♞xe4 dxe4 11.d5 cxd5 12.cxd5 ♞d7 13.♞c3 ♞h4 14.g3 ♞e7 15.f3 exf3 16.♞xf3=) 10...♞xc3 11.bxc3 ♞d7 equal.

Instead of 7.♞d3 I played 7.♞d2?! ♞xd2 8.♞xd2 c5! when Black had easily equalised in Navara-Kosteniuk, Lausanne 2004: 9.♞b5+ ♞c6 10.♞c3 (10.c3=) 10...♞b6 11.♞xc6+ bxc6 12.0-0 and now White has to be careful. After 12...♞d6 13.♞d2 0-0 14.dxc5 ♞xc5 15.b4 the game was equal.

● 6...♞e7 7.♞d3 (after 7.♞d2 ♞xd2 8.♞xd2 White has at best a tiny edge) 7...0-0 8.0-0 ♟f6 (8...♞c6 9.c3) 9.♟f5 (or 9.♞d2 c5!? 10.dxc5 ♞xc5 11.♞b3 ♞b6 12.♟f5 ♞e4=) 9...♞xf5 10.♞xf5 with a minimal advantage.

● 6...c6 and again White can consider both 7.♞d3 and 7.♞d2.

– 7.♞d3 ♞d6, and now:

– 8.c4 0-0 9.cxd5 ♞h4 10.♞xe4 (10.g3 ♞xg3 11.fxg3 ♞xg3∞) 10...♞xe4 11.♞c3 ♞h4 with good compensation.

– 8.♞d2 f5 is also good for Black. In Tigran L. Petrosian-Nasri, Fajr 2003, White played 9.c4 f4 10.cxd5 ♞xd2 11.♞c2, but Black reached a good position after 11...♞e7+ 12.♞e2 (12.♟xd2 0-0∞) 12...♞f3+! 13.gxf3 ♞xe2+ 14.♟xe2 cxd5.

– 8.0-0 0-0 9.c4 ♞e6 (for some strange reason, this move has not been played so far) 10.♞c3 (10.♞xe4 dxe4 11.♞c3 f5 12.d5 cxd5 13.cxd5 ♞d7 looks like an equal position, especially since 14.♞c4 fails to 14...♞xh2+) 10...♞xc3 11.bxc3 ♞d7 with equality.

– More chances for an advantage are offered by 7.♞d2 ♞xd2 (7...♞d6 8.♞xe4 dxe4 9.♞c4 0-0 10.0-0 with an idea f2-f3 is a bit unpleasant for Black. Perhaps simply 7...♞e7!?) 8.♞xd2 ♞d7 (White's pieces are a bit better placed, but Black has no major problems) 9.♞e2 (or 9.♞f3!?) 9...♞e7 10.0-0 0-0 ♟f6 11.♞b4 ♞e6 12.♞xf8 ♞xf8 planning ♞d7, 0-0-0.

● 6...♞c6 7.c3 ♞e6 8.♞d2 (8.♞d3 ♞h4!?) 9.♞f3 0-0-0 10.♞d2!?) 8...f5 9.♞b3!?.

● 6...g6 was twice played by Mikhailchishin, but White was better in Smagin-Mikhailchishin, Russian Championship Riga 1985, after 7.♞d2 ♞g7 8.♞xe4 dxe4 9.c3 0-0 10.♞c4 ♞d7 11.0-0 c5 12.dxc5 ♞xc5 13.♞c2 ♞e6 14.♞d1! (Smagin).

7.♞e2

More spectacular is 7.♞b5+ which was once

played by Smagin: 7...c6 8.0-0 cxb5 (accepting the challenge, 8...♙e6 leads to an equal position) 9.♟xd5 ♖d6 10.♞e1 ♗xd5 11.♟c3 ♖d8 12.♞xe4+ ♙e7 13.♙g5 (in the game happened 13.♗e2, when Black could have played 13...♙f5 14.♞e5 ♟c6⚡. However, Black transposed to the main line after 13...♟c6 14.♙g5) 13...♟c6 (13...f6 14.♙xf6 gxf6 15.♗h5+ ♟f8 16.♞ae1 ♟c6 17.♟d5 probably leads to a draw) 14.♗e2

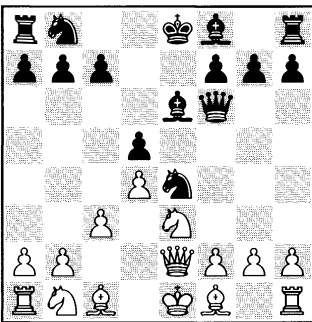
– 14...f6 15.d5 ♟e5 (15...♙f5 16.dxc6 ♙xe4 17.♗xe4=) 16.♟xb5 is about equal, as White has enough compensation after 16...a6 (16...0-0 17.d6 ♙xd6 18.♞d1) 17.♞xe5! fxe5 18.♙xe7 ♟xe7 19.♗xe5+.

– 14...♙e6 15.♙xe7 ♟xe7 16.d5 ♟xd5 17.♞d1 is equal according to Smagin.

– 14...♙f5 15.♙xe7 ♟xe7 16.♞e5 0-0 17.♞xe7 ½-½ Smagin-Makarichev, Moscow 1987.

7...♙e6 8.c3

But not 8.g3? ♗xd4 (Sulskis-Mamedyarov, Dubai 2002) 9.♗b5+ ♟d7 10.♗xb7 ♞b8 11.♗xc7 ♙d6 12.♗c6 0-0⚡ (12...♙xb2!?).



8...c6!

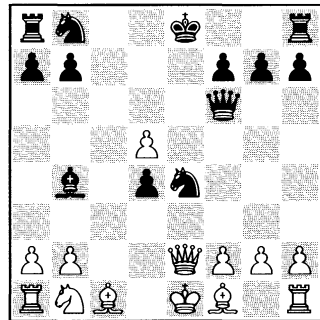
Less accurate is 8...♟c6. White should not play 9.g3, as this allows Black to play 9...0-0-0 10.♙g2 ♗g6 (10...h5 11.♟d2 ♟xd2 12.♙xd2 h4 is about equal) 11.♟d2 f5 12.♟xe4 fxe4 13.f3 (13.♙d2 h5!?) 13...exf3 14.♙xf3 ♙d6 with equality.

Stronger is 9.♟d2 0-0-0, when:

– 10.♟xd5 cannot offer White any advantage. The following continuation seems to be the simplest way to equality: 10...♙xd5 11.♟xe4 ♙xe4 (11...♗g6!? 12.♟g3 ♙d6 promises Black full compensation, e.g. 13.♗h5 ♗e6+ 14.♙e3 g6=) 12.♗xe4 ♟xd4! 13.♙d3 (not 13.cxd4?? ♙b4+, after 13.♙e3 ♟f5 Black has no problems) 13...♙c5. The game is equal. Therefore, stronger is

– 10.g3 ♟xd2 (10...♗g6 11.♟xe4 dxe4 12.♙g2 f5 13.f3 seems to be slightly better for White as Black's knight is not placed very well) 11.♙xd2 h5 12.h4± (12.♙g2 Smagin-Makarichev, Moscow 1990, 12...h4 13.0-0-0 is also playable) and White has better prospects owing to the weakness of the d5-pawn. White intends 13.0-0-0, ♙g2, ♙f3, ♟g2, ♟f4.

8...c5 was played only once, in Jansa-Volkman (Austria tt 2002), but it deserves serious attention. After 9.c4! (9.dxc5 ♙xc5 and White's knight is placed pretty badly) 9...cxd4 10.♟xd5 ♙xd5 11.cxd5 ♙b4+



Not dangerous is 12.♟d1: 12...♗e7 13.f3 (13.♟d2 ♙xd2 14.♙xd2 ♟d7=) 13...♟f6 (13...♟d6?! 14.a3 ♙a5 15.♙f4) 14.♗xe7+ (14.a3 ♙d6 15.♗xe7+ ♟xe7 16.♙c4 ♟bd7 does not cause a big difference) 14...♟xe7 15.♙c4 ♞c8 and Black has equalised. Therefore, Jansa played 12.♙d2, when after

12... ♖e7 13. ♙xb4 ♜xb4+ 14. ♘d2 ♜xd2+ 15. ♜xd2 ♘xd2 16. ♙xd2 ♙e7 17. ♙d3 ♚d8, as in the game, I think that White could have preserved some edge with 18. ♙xd4 (18. ♚e1+ ♙f6 19. ♙xd4 ♘c6+ and ♘e7 is good for Black) 18... ♘c6+ 19. ♙c5 (19. ♙e4 f5=) 19... ♘e5 20. ♚d1 ♚ac8+ 21. ♙d4 ♙d6 (21... ♙f6 22.f4) 22. ♚e1, but I can easily be wrong.

Instead of going for the ending, Black could also try 14... ♙d8!?, and White has to be careful in order to avoid difficulties: 15.f3! (15.0-0-0 ♜c5+ is good for Black after both 16. ♙b1 d3! 17. ♜e1 ♜c2+ 18. ♙al ♘xf2 19. ♚c1 ♚e8! and 16. ♘c4 ♚e8 with threats 17...d3 and 17...b5) 15... ♘g3 16.hxg3 ♚e8 17. ♚xh7 ♚xe2+ 18. ♙xe2 and White has a small advantage as the move 18... ♙e7 (18... ♜f8 19.0-0-0 ♘d7 20. ♘e4±; 18... ♘d7 19. ♚h8+ ♘f8 20.a3 ♜e7 21. ♘e4±) is met by 19. ♚h8! ♜c5 20. ♘e4 (20. ♙c4!?) 20... ♜xd5 21. ♚c1.

9. ♘d2

White cannot get along without this move and 9.g3 ♘d7 10. ♙g2 ♜g6 (10... ♙d6!?) 11.f3 ♙xg3+!; 11... ♘g5 12.h4 ♙xg3+ 13. ♙d1) 11. ♘d2 f5 is OK for Black. After 12. ♘e4! (White needs to destroy Black's centre otherwise he would be worse) the chances are equal:

– 12...fxe4 13.f3 ♘f6 (13...exf3 14. ♙xf3 0-0-0 15. ♘g2!?) 14.fxe4 ♘xe4 15.0-0-0-0.
– 12...dxe4 13.f3 exf3 14. ♙xf3 0-0-0 15.0-0 ♙d6 16.d5 cxd5 17. ♘xd5.

9... ♘xd2

Also playable is 9... ♘d7: 10.g3 ♜g6 11. ♘e4 dxe4 12. ♙g2 f5 13.f3 exf3 14. ♙xf3 0-0-0 15.0-0 ♙d6 16.d5 cxd5 17. ♘xd5=, Yegiazarian-Mamedyarov, Tbilisi 2001.

10. ♙xd2

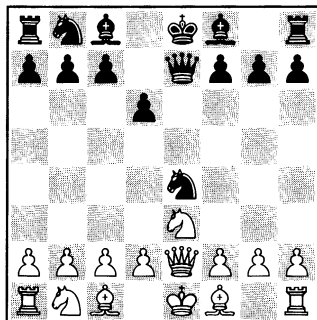
Nothing is promised by 10. ♜xd2.

10... ♘d7 11.g3 ♙d6 12. ♙g2 0-0 13.0-0 ♜g6

With equality.

The strongest line

1.e4 e5 2. ♘f3 ♘f6 3. ♘xe5 d6 4. ♘c4 ♘xe4 5. ♜e2 ♜e7 6. ♘e3



This line is the 'youngest' one. White has good results with it. Nevertheless, Black should not have any problems if he plays well.

Innocuous is 6.d3 ♘f6 7. ♙g5 ♙e6; ♘c4 is not placed very well, now.

6...c6

Sensible is 6... ♘f6. Nothing is gained by 7.b3 ♘c6 8. ♙b2 ♙e6, or by 7.d4 d5 8.b3 ♘c6 9.c3 ♙d7.

White's main attempt after 6... ♘f6 is 7.g3: – 7... ♙d7 8. ♙g2 ♙c6 9.f3 g6 10. ♘c3 (10.0-0 ♙g7 11. ♚e1 0-0 12.d4 ♚e8 is OK for Black, as 12.c4 is harmless due to 12...d5) 10... ♘bd7! (10... ♙g7 11.d4 0-0 12.d5 ♙d7 13.0-0 and White was better, Planinc-Jones, Nice Olympiad 1974) 11.d4 ♘b6 12. ♙d2 planning to castle queenside is slightly better for White owing to a spatial advantage.

– 7...d5 (for some curious reason, this move was not played so far) 8.d4 ♘c6 9.c3 ♙e6 10. ♙g2 0-0-0 11.0-0 and Black cannot be worse after both 11...h5 and 11... ♜d7.

Playable is 6... ♙e6 7.g3 (7.d4 d5 8. ♘d2 might be more dangerous) 7... ♘c6 8. ♙g2 d5 9.0-0 0-0-0 10.c3 h5 when Black was OK, Cabrilo-Marciano, Sabac 1998.

7.c4 g6 8.d3

Alternatively, 8.g3 does not seem to be very dangerous 8...♙g7 9.♙g2 0-0 10.0-0 ♘g5 (also logical is 10...♞e8). So far the game B.Jaracz-Lysiak, Wisla Hugart open 1999. In this position a logical continuation would be 11.♘c3 ♙h3 12.f4 ♙xg2 13.♙xg2 ♘e6 after which 14.f5 ♘c5 15.f6 does not work: 15...♙xf6 16.♘d5 cxd5 17.♘xd5 ♙d4+.

8...♘g5

Also natural is 8...♘f6:

● 9.♘c3 ♙g7 10.g3 0-0 11.♙g2 ♘a6 was played in the game Sasu-Ionescu, Bucharest 1998. The game continued 12.d4 ♘c7 13.d5 (13.0-0 d5 14.b3!?) after which Black could play 13...cxd5 14.♘cxd5 (14.cxd5 b6) 14...♘cxd5 15.♘xd5 ♘xd5 16.♙xd5 ♞e8 with a pleasant game. I would prefer 12.0-0, especially when it is not a good idea to play 12...♘c5?! 13.d4 ♘c4? because of 14.♘c2 ♞e8 15.♞e1. White position seems a bit better to me.

● 9.b3!? ♙g7 10.♙b2 0-0 11.♘c3 – 11...♞e8!? 12.0-0-0 d5 13.d4 ♙e6 (13...♙h6 14.h3!? ♙xe3+ 15.♙xe3 ♙xe3+ 16.fxe3 ♞xe3 17.g4=) 14.♙f3 leads to a complicated position with equal chances.

– 11...a5 12.0-0-0 ♘bd7. Would you guess that this position originated from the Petroff Defence? 13.♞e1 ♘b6 14.♘g4 ♙xe2?! (14...♙e6 15.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 gives Black more play, a5-a4 might be dangerous) 15.♘xf6+ ♙xf6 16.♙xe2± happened in Cicak-Oral, Ostrava 1998.

9.♙d2 ♙g7 10.♙c3 ♙xc3+ 11.♘xc3 ♘e6 12.♘c2

More promising than 12.0-0-0 ♘d4 13.♙d2 ♙e6 14.♘e2, which is about equal after 14...♙f6 15.♘xd4 ♙xd4 16.♘c2 ♙f6.

12...c5

Black misses his g7-bishop after 12...0-0 13.0-0-0±.

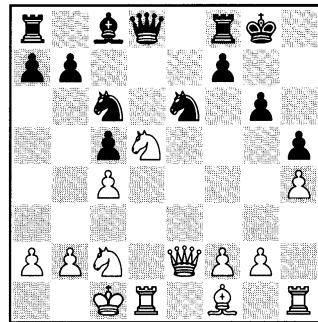
13.♘d5 ♙d8 14.h4

This may not be the strongest move. 14.0-0-0!? ♘c6 15.d4 0-0 16.dxc5 dxc5 17.h4 ♘ed4 18.♘xd4 cxd4 19.h5 b5 leads to complications which seem to be favourable for White after 20.♙f3 (20.cxb5 ♙xd5 21.bxc6 ♙e6!) 20...♙f5 21.g4 ♙g5+ 22.♞d2 ♘e5 23.♙a3! (23.♙g3 ♘xg4 24.f3 ♞ac8 25.♞g1 d3) 23...♘xg4 24.f4 ♙d8 25.♘e7+ and White is better, especially after: 25...♙g7 26.♙g2 ♘e3 27.♙xa8 ♙xa8 28.♞dh2.

14...h5?!

Better is 14...♘c6 15.h5 0-0 16.0-0-0 ♘ed4, e.g. 17.♘xd4 ♘xd4 18.♘e7+ ♙g7 19.♙e3 ♙e6 20.hxg6 hxg6 and Black has no problems.

15.0-0-0 ♘c6 16.d4 0-0 17.dxc5 dxc5



And now, instead of 18.♙e3 (as in Cabrilo-Marjanovic, Pancevo 1987) when Black could have equalized with 18...♘ed4!, I prefer

18.g4 ♘ed4

Of course, 18...hxg4 19.♙xg4 is very risky, too.

19.♘xd4 ♘xd4 20.♙e5 f6 21.♘e7+ 21.♙e4!? f5 22.gxf5 ♙xf5 23.♘e7+ is also very promising.

21...♙f7 22.♙xc5 ♙xe7 23.♙xe7+ ♙xe7 24.♞xd4

And after 25.♙g2 White will have a huge advantage.

Let us examine two recent games in this modern line.

□ **Mladen Palac**

■ **Ante Saric**

Zagreb ch-CRO 2004

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♗xe5 d6 4.♗c4 ♗xe4 5.♖e2 ♖e7 6.♗e3 ♗f6 7.d4 g6

I believe that 7...d5 is stronger.

8.♗c3 c6

White can choose between two promising moves after 8...♗g7 as both 9.g3 and 9.♗e5 ♗xd5 10.♗xd5 ♖xe2+ 11.♗xe2 ♗d7 give him the slightly better chances.

9.d5

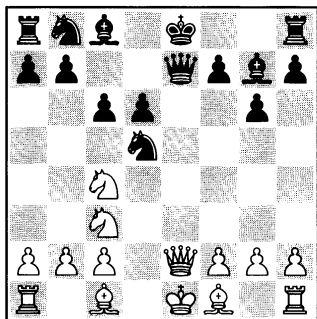
Otherwise Black would play d6-d5 with a solid position.

9...♗g7

The move 9...♗bd7 also has its drawbacks: 10.♗d2 (10.g3 ♗b6 11.♗g2 cxd5 12.♗cxd5 ♗bxd5 13.♗xd5 ♗xd5 14.♗xd5 ♗e6 15.♗g2 ♗g7=) 10...♗g7 11.0-0-0 ♗b6 (11...0-0 12.♗c4±) 12.♗c4 (12.♖f3 ♖c7±) 12...♖xe2 13.♗xe2 ♗xc4 14.♗xc4 White is better as Black has serious problems with his d6-pawn.

10.♗c4 ♗xd5

Black does not want to develop the white bishop for free: 10...♖xe2+?! 11.♗xe2 ♗xd5 12.♗xd5 cxd5 13.♗xd6+ is quite similar to the game continuation.



11.♗xd5

I believe that 11.♗xd6+ was stronger, e.g. 11...♗d7 12.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 13.♗xc8+ ♖xc8 14.♗g5+ ♗f6 15.♗xd5+ cxd5 16.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 17.0-0-0±.

11...♖xe2+

Another possibility was 11...cxd5 12.♗xd6+ ♗d7 13.♖xe7+ (13.♗xc8 ♖xc8 14.♗e3? ♖b4+ 15.c3? ♗xc3+) 13...♗xe7 and now:

– 14.♗xc8+ ♖xc8 15.♗d3 (15.♗g5+ f6 16.♗d2 ♖xc2 17.♗c3 d4 18.♗xd4 ♗c6 19.♗c3 ♖d8 20.♗e2 ♗e5) 15...♗c6 16.♗g5+±, Black has to be cautious in order to fully equalise.

– 14.♗b5!? ♗d7 (14...♗a6 15.♗g5+±) 15.♗e3 ♗xb2 16.♖d1 might be a better try.

12.♗xe2 cxd5 13.♗xd6+ ♗d7

Here 13...♗e7 is also unpleasant as a result of 14.♗b5 (14.♗xc8+?! ♖xc8 15.♗g5+ f6! 16.♗d2 ♖xc2 17.♗c3 ♗d7 18.♗d1 ♖xc3 19.bxc3 f5=) 14...♗a6 (14...♗d7 15.♗f4) 15.♗g5+±.

14.♗xf7 ♖e8

Black has some compensation for the pawn, since the white king is not placed ideally.

15.♗d1!?

15.c3 ♗c6 16.♗e3 might be a good alternative to the text.

15...♗c6

15...♖f8 16.♗g5 ♖xf2 17.♗f3 leads to a loss of an exchange. Black will have some compensation, but not enough.

16.♗g4+

After 16.♗f3 (16.♗f4?? ♖f8 17.♗g4+ ♗e7) White can win a second pawn: 16...♗e7 17.♗xd5, but Black's compensation seems to be very good after 17...♗e6 18.♗xe6 ♗xe6 19.♗g5+ ♗f5 20.♗f3 ♖ad8+ 21.♗d2±.

16...♗c7?

16...♗e7 17.♗xc8 ♖axc8 18.♗g5 ♗d7 seems to be good for Black as he threatens to play 19...♗b4. After the text White keeps a

material advantage and Black has not enough compensation.

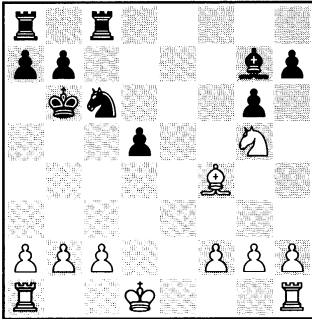
17. ♖f4+ ♜b6 18. ♙xc8

Also good is 18. ♙f3!?

18... ♚exc8

Not 18... ♚axc8? 19. ♜d6+—.

19. ♜g5



Now White is a clear pawn up. Black rooks are no more active than White's.

19... ♜a6 20. ♜e6 ♙xb2 21. ♚b1 ♙d4
22. ♜c7+ ♚xc7 23. ♙xc7 ♙xf2 24. ♚f1
♚c8 25. ♚xf2 ♙xc7 26. ♚f6 ♚e7
27. ♜d2 ♚e4 28. ♚f7 ♚h4 29. ♚bxb7
♚hx2 30. ♚hx7 ♙xg2+ 31. ♜c1 g5?!

Here 31...d4± was more tenacious.

32. ♚bd7+— d4 33. ♚h6 ♜b5 34. ♚b7+
1-0

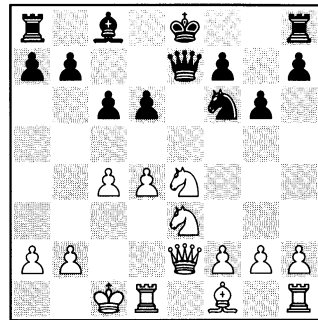
□ Tatiana Kosintseva

■ Ivan Akimov

St Petersburg 2003

1.e4 e5 2. ♜f3 ♜f6 3. ♜xe5 d6 4. ♜c4
♜xe4 5. ♚e2 ♚e7 6. ♜e3 c6 7. c4 g6
8. d3 ♜c5 9. ♙d2 ♙g7 10. ♙c3 ♙xc3+
11. ♜xc3 ♜bd7 12. 0-0-0 ♜f6 13. d4
♜a6?!

This is a little dubious. Instead, 13... ♜ce4 looks much more natural and I think it should be better. Nevertheless, White maintains a slight edge after 14. ♜xe4



● 14... ♚xe4

Now after 15.g3?! ♚xh1 I think that Black has a few ways to a draw after 16. ♜d5+ (16. ♙g2 ♚xd1+ 17. ♜xd1+!?)=:

– 16... ♜f8 17. ♚e7+ ♜g8.

– 16... ♜e4.

– 16... ♙e6 17. ♜xf6+ ♜e7 18. d5 ♜xf6
19. dxe6 d5 20. ♚e1 (20. f3 ♚g1 21. f4 ♜g7
22. exf7 ♚c5) 20... ♚e4=.

However, on move 15 White can play 15.f3 ♚e7 16. ♚d2±.

● 14... ♜xe4 15. ♚c2 0-0 16. ♙d3± due to the control of the centre and the safer position of the white king.

14. ♚f3 ♜c7 15. ♙d3 0-0

15... ♜e6 16. d5 ♜d4 17. ♚f4 (17. ♚g3?? ♜h5) 17... ♚e5 18. ♚xe5+ dxe5 19. ♚he1 is also better for White, because 19...0-0 is met by 20. ♜c2 ♜xc2 21. ♜xc2 cxd5 22. cxd5 and Black has significant problems with his central pawn (♚e2, ♚de1).

16.h4

White had another promising continuation: 16. ♚he1 ♜e6?! (16... ♚d8) 17. d5 ♜d4 18. ♚f4 ♚e5 19. ♚h4!±.

16...d5

Here 16...h5± has other drawbacks, the g6-pawn becomes weak and 17. ♚he1 ♚d8 18. ♚g3 followed by f2-f4-f5 is very dangerous. 16... ♜e6 17. ♙c2 (or 17. ♙e2) does not change a lot.

17. cxd5 ♜cxd5 18. ♜cxd5 cxd5

No better is 18...♖xd5, since 19.♗xd5 cxd5 20.h5 is also better for White, as the line 20...♙g5+ 21.♖b1 ♗g4 22.♙g3 is dangerous only for Black.

19.♖b1

19.♗xd5 ♗xd5 20.♙xd5 ♗e6 gives Black good counterplay.

19...♗e6 20.h5 ♖ad8

If Black takes on h5 – 20...♗xh5 – then simplest is 21.♗xd5 ♗xd5 22.♙xd5±. True, the more spectacular 21.♖xh5 gxh5 22.♗xh7+ leads to a win after 22...♗xh7? 23.♙xh5+ ♗g7 24.♗xd5 ♙d8 (24...♗xd5 25.♙g4+ ♗f6 26.♙h4+ ♗e6 27.♖e1+++; 24...♗f5+ 25.♙xf5±) 25.♖d3 ♗f5 26.♙xf5 ♖e8 27.♖g3+ ♗f8 28.♙h5+–.

However, Black has 22...♗g7 which leads to a position with mutual chances.

21.g4 ♖d6 22.g5 ♗e4

Here 22...♗xh5 23.♖xh5 gxh5 24.♗xh7+ ♗g7 25.♙xh5 ♗c8 26.♗xd5 is also favourable for White, but Black can still fight after 26...♙e6 27.♗f6 ♙h3 28.♗e4±.

23.♗xe4 dxe4 24.♙f4

White knight is very well placed, now. It helps to neutralise the black bishop's attacking power after d4-d5.

24...♖b6?

Black's attack can be successfully parried. It was better to keep the rook on the d-file with 24...♖fd8 25.♙e5 ♙d7. The direct approach is not the best now: 26.h6?! (26.hxg6 fxg6 27.♙xe4 ♗d5 28.♗xd5 ♖xd5±) 26...f6 27.gxf6 ♙f7.

Note that White is clearly better after 24...♗d5 25.♗g4 e3 26.f3.

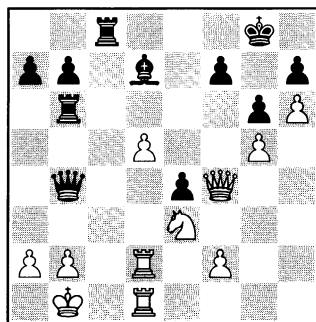
25.♖d2

This move is more solid than the alternative 25.d5 ♙b4 26.b3 ♗d7±.

25...♙b4

Black cannot prevent White from playing d4-d5.

26.♖hd1 ♖c8 27.d5 ♗d7 28.h6



28...♖e8?!

Alas, 28...♗b5 would allow a beautiful finale after 29.♙e5 ♗d3+ (29...f6 30.gxf6 ♖f8± is better, but not satisfactory) 30.♖xd3! f6! 31.gxf6 exd3 32.♗c4!! (Fritz). – 32...♖xc4 33.♙e8+ ♙f8 34.f7+ – 32...♙xc4 33.f7+ ♗xf7 34.♙g7+ ♗e8 35.♖e1+ with mate, or – 32...♖a6 33.f7+ ♗xf7 34.♙g7+ ♗e8 35.d6 ♖xd6 36.♗xd6+ ♙xd6 37.♖e1+ ♗d8 38.♙g8+ ♗d7 39.♙f7+–. – Best is 32...♖f8 33.♗xb6 ♙xb6 34.♖xd3 ♙xf6 (34...♙xf2 35.♙e6+ ♗h8 36.♖e3+–) 35.f4 and White has a winning position.

29.d6

Now the weakness of the black king turns out to be decisive.

29...♙b5 30.♗d5 ♗f5 31.♙e3 ♖xd6 32.♗e7+

Even stronger is 32.♙c3 f6 33.♙c7. However, the text move is good enough.

32...♖xe7 33.♖xd6 ♗e6?!

33...f6+–.

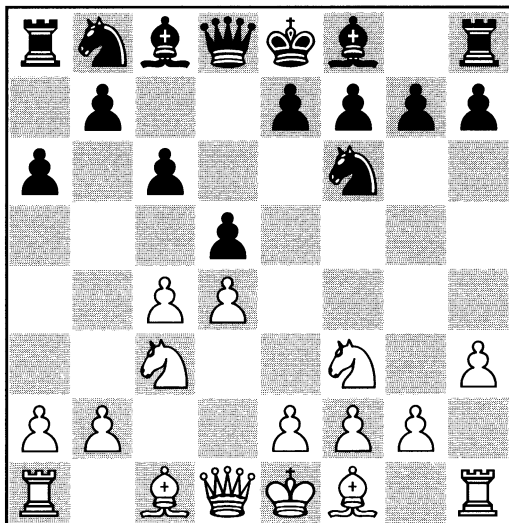
34.♙d4

1-0

CHAPTER 6

Dorian Rogozenko

Let's wait together in the Slav



The Chebanenko Variation with 5.h3!?

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.f3 f6 4.c3 a6

The move 4...a6 has proved to be a tough nut to crack and in spite of various continuations for the first player, Black is usually happy with the resulting positions. Finding an advantage for White against the Chebanenko Slav is certainly not an easy task, but what about surprising your opponent?

First of all let's figure out the purpose of the move 4...a6. One might think that by playing 4...a6 Black wants to play ...b5. However, that's only a (rather small) part of the story. For instance, after 1.d4 a6 Black also wants to play ...b5, which does not mean that 1...a6 is a good or popular continuation.

I was a pupil of Chebanenko's myself and

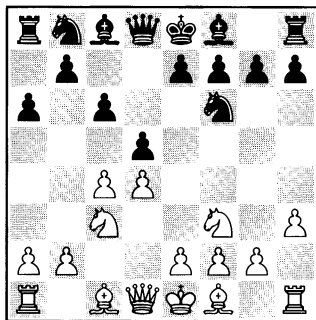
followed the development of 4...a6 long before it became popular on the highest level. Therefore, I can tell the reader that when in the late 1980-ies we (Moldavian players) were using this move at different Soviet tournaments, the reaction was something like 'come on guys, what are you, beginners or what?'. Indeed, at first sight, the advance of the a-pawn seems to serve only one purpose: to follow-up with ...b5 and nothing else.

In fact the real advantage of the move 4...a6 lies far beyond the mere preparation of ...b5. Without making any serious concessions (like giving up the centre with 4...dxc4, or closing the diagonal for the bishop on c8

with 4...e6) Black passes the ball into White's court and wants to force his opponent to make those concessions. For example a natural developing move like 5.♘f4 has the drawback that after 5...dxc4 6.a4 Black plays 6...♘d5, attacking the bishop. The move 5.♙g5 before Black has played ...e6 always means that White must reckon with the immediate answer ...♘e4. The move 5.e3 is just the sort of concession I was talking about, since it closes the diagonal of the bishop on c1, and allows Black to comfortably develop his bishop on g4. The advance 5.a4 before Black has played ...dxc4 creates some weaknesses in the queenside pawn formation. The most principled answer to the Chebanenko Slav is probably 5.c5, but without being forced to release the central tension, in a way White gives up the fight for the centre. Please don't get me wrong: some of the above-mentioned possibilities to meet the Chebanenko Slav are by no means weak. What I am arguing is that usually after White's fifth move Black will be satisfied in having forced his opponent to make some sort of concession.

Therefore, I would suggest the following SOS-solution to meet the 'ugly-looking' 4...a6. Let's play an even more surprising advance from the other side.

5.h3!?



In 1997 when I saw this move for the first time my reaction was 'what is this beginner-like kind of play?'. Doesn't it remind you of something mentioned above? Strangely enough, facing it as Black in a Bundesliga game I felt quite uncomfortable, since I couldn't get rid of the feeling that my opponent was trying to trick me. Why was that? Very simple – 4...a6 suddenly appears to be just a 'pale waiting attempt', since it has been answered with an even more provoking 'waiting' move. Hmm, I felt confused.

With the move 5.h3 White asks his opponent: 'OK, great, I practically changed nothing in the position, now show me the merits of 4...a6'.

We'll see below that this provoking and waiting attitude is not only unexpected for Black, but is also quite a reasonable approach from White. Just like 4...a6, the move 5.h3 has benefits beyond the 'wait and see' strategy. First of all later on White can develop the bishop to f4, not fearing its exchange after ...♘h5. Secondly, the move 5.h3 fits in rather well with almost any future arrangement of White's pieces. Of course taking control over the g4-square will often turn out to be useful for the first player. In modern opening theory the advance g2-g4 has become a rather common theme, so I would not be surprised if in the future we'll see that the main reason for playing 5.h3 is to follow-up with g2-g4.

□ Rainer Knaak
 ■ Dorian Rogozenko
 Germany Bundesliga 1996/97

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6
 5.h3 e6**

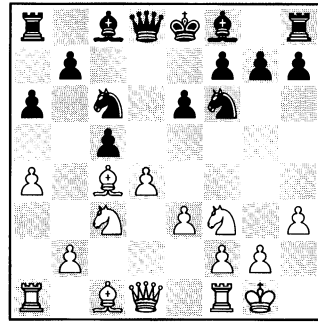
The main alternative 5...b5 is analysed in the next game.

Some respectable grandmasters have recommended **5...dxc4**. Nevertheless I think that taking on c4 here is a dubious continuation. In most of the variations given below we will see that the pawn on h3 favours White. Let us investigate the situation after 6.a4:

● 6...♙f5 7.e3 e6 8.♙xc4 h6 9.♖b3 ♗c7 10.0-0 ♘bd7 11.♚e1 ♙e7 12.e4 ♙h7 13.♙d2 0-0 14.a5± Stocek-Berthelot, Sautron 2003.

● 6...♘d5 7.a5! (7.e4 ♘xc3 8.bxc3 b5) 7...♙f5 8.e3 ♙d3 (8...e6 9.♙xc4 ♙b4 10.♖b3±; 8...♘b4 9.e4±) 9.♙xd3 cxd3 10.♖xd3 ♘b4 11.♗e2 ♘d7 12.0-0. White will play e3-e4 next with a clear advantage. Please note that if Black would have had the pawn on a5 and White the pawn on a4, the position would have been close to equal. In the game Eingorn-Volkov, St Petersburg 1996, Black now tried a radical method to solve the opening problems. It brought him nothing but trouble, though: 12...♗c7 13.e4 e5 14.dxe5 ♘xe5 15.♙f4 f6 16.♘xe5 fxe5 17.♖h5+ ♗f7 18.♖xe5+ ♙e7 19.♚ad1 and White is winning.

● 6...e6 7.e3 (this is simple and good. White can also play the sharper 7.e4 ♙b4 8.♗c2 b5 9.♙e2 with compensation for the pawn. The game Hellsten-M.Andersson, Sweden 1999, continued: 9...♘bd7 10.0-0 ♙b7 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘e4 f5?! 13.exf6 gxf6 14.b3 cxb3 15.♖xb3 ♗e7 16.♘e5! – after this unexpected blow Black is in dire straits – 16...0-0 17.♘xd7 ♗xd7 18.♙h6 ♗e7 19.♙xf8 ♚xf8 20.♚fc1 and White confidently converted his extra exchange into a full point) 7...c5 (7...b6 8.♙xc4 ♙b7 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♗e2 ♘bd7 11.e4 b5 12.♙d3 b4 13.e5 bxc3 14.exf6 ♘xf6 15.bxc3 c5 16.♚b1 ♙xf3 17.♖xf3 ♗d5 18.♗e2 ♗c6 19.♙g5 ♘d5 20.♙xe7 ♘xe7 21.♖f3± Lerner-Ragozin, Metz 1996) 8.♙xc4 ♘c6 9.0-0

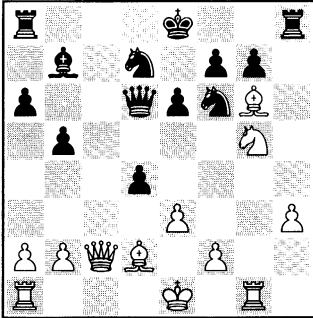


An amazing situation: we have a position from the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) with an extra tempo for White – the pawn on h3 instead of h2. The chances that this will be favourable for Black are very small. This would occur only in case of a kingside attack with the pieces, when the first player won't have the possibility to use square h3 for the rook. However, much more realistic is that only White will benefit from the pawn on h3, since it restricts Black's options. Normally in the QGA in a similar position from the last diagram Black has two possible plans:

- to take on d4 and play against the IQP, or
- (a safer plan) to develop ♗c7, ♙e7 (♙d6), 0-0, b6 and ♙b7.

In the second case White often plays for d4-d5, followed by e3-e4. The move h3 is very useful for that plan, which means that if Black doesn't wish to recognize the fact that pawn on h3 clearly favours White, he is practically forced to play against the isolated pawn. 9...♙e7 10.♗e2 cxd4 11.♚d1 e5 (11...0-0 12.exd4 ♘b4 13.♘e5 ♘bd5 14.♙g5 ♘xc3 15.bxc3 ♘d5 16.♙d2 ♙d7 17.♙d3 ♗c7 18.♖h5 f5 19.♚e1 ♙d6 20.♖f3 ♚ae8 21.a5± Golod-Yeke, Izmir 2004) 12.exd4 exd4 13.♙e3! (with the pawn on h2 in a similar position of the Queen's Gambit Accepted this move would have been bad in view of the answer ...♙g4!) 13...0-0 14.♘xd4 ♗c7 15.♘xc6 bxc6 16.a5

– 9.♔d2 dxc4 10.♙xc4 b5 11.♙d3 ♗b7 (according to Zviagintsev White's chances are also preferable after 11...c5 12.♘e4 ♘xe4 13.♙xe4 ♖b8 14.0-0-0) 12.g5 hxg5 13.♘xg5 ♜e7 14.♖g1 c5 15.♘ce4 cxd4 16.♘xd6+ ♜xd6 17.♙g6!



This position is from Zviagintsev-Burmakin, St Petersburg 1999. After 17...♘e5 White could have achieved a big advantage with 18.♙f7+!. Therefore in Nybäck-Dautov, Calvia ol 2004, Black improved with 17...0-0 18.♙xf7+ ♖xf7 19.♘xf7 ♗xf7 20.♜g6+ ♗e7 21.♜xg7+ ♗e8 22.exd4 (Zviagintsev mentioned already back in 1999 that White achieves a clear advantage in the endgame after 22.♜h8+ ♜f8 23.♜xf8+ ♗xf8 24.exd4. Maybe this evaluation is a bit too optimistic though) 22...♜xd4 23.♖d1 ♜e4+ 24.♙e3 ♜b4+ 25.♖d2 ♖c8 26.♜g6+ ♗e7 27.♖g4 ♙f3 28.♜g7+ and the players agreed to a draw. The general impression is that only White can search for further improvements, since he always has a draw in the pocket.

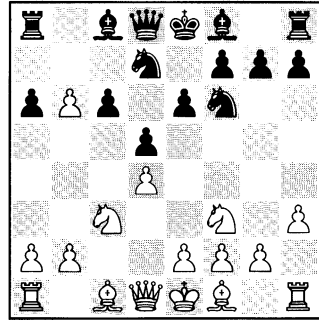
6...b6

The only way to get counterplay is connected to this advance. Leaving it for a later stage offers White an additional possibility to protect the pawn c5 with b2-b4: 6...♘bd7 7.♙f4 b6 8.b4 a5 9.a3 and White is slightly better. Or 6...♙e7 7.♙f4 0-0 8.e3 b6 9.b4 a5

10.a3 also with a slight edge for White.

7.cxb6 ♘bd7

Simply bad is 7...♜xb6?! 8.♘a4! ♙b4+ 9.♙d2 ♜a5 10.a3 ♙xd2+ 11.♘xd2±.



8.g3!?

Interesting play. Stoczek-Movsesian, Czech Republic 2003/04, went 8.e3 ♜xb6 9.♙d3 c5 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.♘a4 ♜a7 12.dxc5 ♘xc5 13.♘xc5 ♜xc5 14.b3 0-0 15.♙b2 ♙d7 16.♘e5 ♙b5 17.♖c1 ♜b6 18.♙xb5 axb5 19.♘c6 ♙a3 20.♙xf6 gxf6 21.♜g4+ ♗h8 22.♜h4 ♗g7 23.♜g3+ ♗h8 24.♜h4 ½-½. In my opinion the move 8.♙f4!?, followed by e2-e3, deserves attention.

8...♜xb6

Black captured with the knight in Handke-Miloradovic, Stockholm 2004. After 8...♘xb6 9.♙g2 ♙d6 (9...c5 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.b3±) 10.0-0 0-0 11.b3 c5 12.♙a3 c4 13.♙c5 cxb3 14.axb3 ♖b8 15.♘e5 ♜c7 16.b4 ♘f7 17.♘d3 ♘c4 18.e4! ♙xc5 19.bxc5 dxe4 20.♘xe4± a5? 21.♜c2 ♙a6 22.♖fc1 h6 23.♖a4 White was winning.

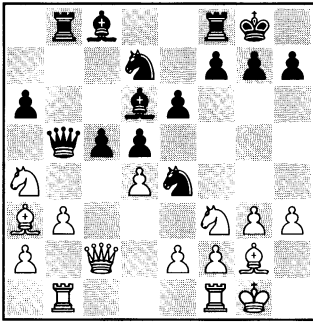
9.♙g2 c5

A logical move, which, however, does not reach equality. In a later Bundesliga game I postponed this advance for a while, but apparently White keeps the better prospects anyway: 9...♙d6 10.0-0 0-0 11.♜c2 (11.e4?! ♘xe4 12.♘xe4 dxe4 13.♘g5 f5! 14.♘xe6 ♖e8±, also interesting is 11.♖b1!?)

11...c5. Here in the game Ftacnik-Rogozenko, Bundesliga 2000/01, my opponent played 12.dxc5 ♖xc5 13.♙e3 and after the precise 13...♙d7! Black equalized completely. Stronger for White was 12.♙e3! with an edge.

10.0-0 ♙d6 11.♖b1 0-0 12.♗a4! ♖b5 13.b3 ♗b8

White also has a slight edge after 13...♙b7 14.dxc5 ♖xc5 15.♗d4 ♖e8 (15...♖a5? 16.b4 ♖xa4 17.bxc5+-) 16.♙a3 ♖e7 17.♗xc5 ♙xc5 18.♙xc5 ♖xc5 19.b4. **14.♙a3 ♗e4 15.♖c2**



This position is slightly better for White. The second player can hardly achieve more than an endgame where White will have a queenside majority. Clearly, Black may never hope to achieve more than a draw.

15...♖a5

Or 15...♙b7 16.dxc5 ♖dxc5 17.♗xc5 ♖xc5 18.♗g5±.

16.dxc5 ♗dxc5 17.♗g5!

After this strong move Black faces an unpleasant choice. 17.♗xc5 ♖xc5 is more or less equal.

17...♗xc5

The knight will be completely misplaced on g5, but I didn't like 17...f5 18.♗xe4 ♖xe4 19.♙xd6 ♖xd6 20.♖c5, with a clear positional advantage for White.

18.♙xc5 ♙xc5 19.♖xc5!

Unclear is 19.♗xc5 e5!?.

19...♖b5

After 19...♖xc5 20.♗xc5 e5 21.♙xd5 ♙xh3 22.♗fd1 White is much better thanks to his queenside pawn majority and the poor position of the knight on g5.

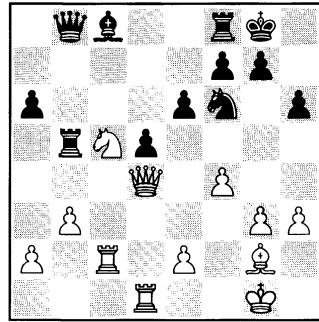
20.♖e3 h6 21.♗fd1

White has a small, but stable advantage.

21...♖b4

No better is 21...♖b7 22.♖bc1 ♗c7 23.♖xc7 ♖xc7 24.♗c1±.

22.♖bc1 ♖d6 23.f4! ♗h7 24.♗c2 ♗f6 25.♖d4 ♖b8 26.♗c5



Very skilful play by Knaak. Something definitely went wrong for Black, since now White is already much better.

26...♖b4 27.♖f2 a5 28.♗dc1 ♖b5 29.♖e3 ♖a7 30.♗f2 ♙b7 31.♗xb7 ♖xb7 32.♗c7 ♖b8 33.♖a7 ♖d8

Black keeps the queens on the board since 33...♖xa7+ 34.♖xa7 is completely hopeless.

34.♖a6 ♖b8 35.♖xa5 ♖a8 36.♖d2 ♖b8 37.♗7c2 ♖b6+ 38.♖e3 d4 39.♖d3 ♖a3

Black does not have sufficient compensation for the pawn, but finally in this game he has some activity at least.

40.♗c6 ♖a7 41.♗c7 ♖b6 42.♗1c6 ♖b8 43.♗c2 ♗d8 44.♙b7 ♗f8 45.♙f3
But not 45.♖xd4? ♖a7 46.♖b4 ♗d5+-.

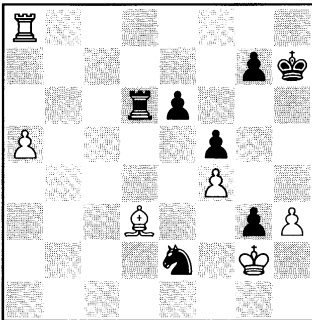
45...♖d8 46.♔g2 h5 47.♚c4 h4
48.♚c5! ♖a6 49.♗b7 ♕d6 50.♚xd6
♗dxd6 51.a4+- hxg3 52.♗d2?

White spoils a very good game in a technically winning position. The easiest win was 52.♗cc7.

52...♗d7! 53.♗b4?! ♗c5 54.♗bxh4
♗xd4 55.♗xd4 ♗xb3 56.♗d8+ ♔h7
57.♗a8 ♗d6 58.a5 ♗d4 59.♗e4+?

This mistake caused by the time-trouble allows Black to escape using tactical motifs connected with the passed pawn on g3. On the other hand it is also very likely that Black can reach a draw in the endgame after 59.♔xg3 ♗xf3 60.♔xf3 ♗d2 61.a6 ♖a2 62.h4 ♔g6.

59...f5 60.♗d3 ♗xe2!



Unexpectedly the pawn g3 saves the day.

61.♗xe2 ♗d2 62.♔xg3

Or 62.♔f3 g2 with a draw.

62...♗xe2 63.a6 ♖e3+ 64.♔g2 ♗e4

65.a7 ♖a4 66.♔f3 ♖a3+ 67.♔e2 g6

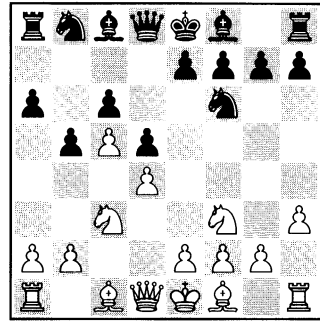
1/2-1/2

□ Peter Heine Nielsen

■ Dorian Rogozenko

Germany Bundesliga 2000/01

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 a6
5.h3 b5 6.c5



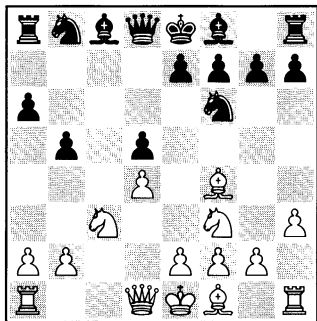
The differences with regard to the line 5.c5 are obvious – White has the pawn on h3 and Black the pawn on b5 instead of b7. Let's see who will benefit from this. Black can claim that his queenside is not blockaded and with his pawn on b5 the weakness of square b6 (and sometimes of pawn b7 as well) is practically non-existent. Besides, White's space advantage is less obvious now. This is correct and it is also what I thought during the game. However, the more I delved into the position the more I realized that White's advantages are no less valuable. Here they are:

1. Black does not have at his disposal the counterplay with b7-b6
2. The pawn on h3 is a necessary move in the line 5.c5, since the best diagonal for White's dark-squared bishop is b8-h2 and on f4 the bishop needs to be protected against the exchange ...♗h5. With the pawn on h3 the move ...♗h5 is obviously pointless due to the answer ♗h2
3. The advance e2-e4 is much more dangerous for Black now, since now the weakness of pawn c6 will be fatal. Therefore Black must prevent e2-e4 at all costs.

In my opinion White is slightly better in the diagram position and I am not the only one to affirm that. Viktor Bologan expressed the same opinion already in 1997, when he faced the move 5.h3 for the first time.

Apart from 6.c5 White has an interesting op-

tion to transpose into a kind of position similar to the Exchange Variation of the Slav Defence with **6.cxd5**. The justification of this decision is that with the pawn on b5 Black's development options are considerably restricted. Nevertheless the drawback is obvious too – the arising positions offer both sides limited fighting resources. After **6...cxd5 7.♗f4** Black has several options:

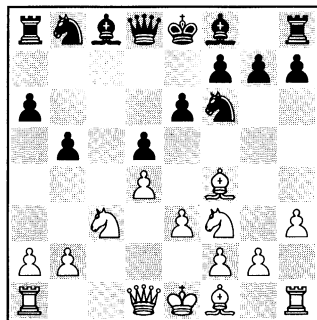


● **7...♗f5?** (with the pawn on b5 Black should keep the bishop on the queenside) **8.e3 e6 9.♞c1 ♗e7 10.a4** and Black has problems protecting his weaknesses. The game *Eingorn-Gärtner, Oberwart 1998*, continued **10...b4 11.♗e2 (11.♗b1!?** is also interesting, going to d2 and then to b3) **11...♞a7 12.♗g3 ♗g6 13.♗d3 0-0 14.0-0 ♗d6 15.♗xg6 hxg6 16.♗xd6 ♞xd6 17.♞c2 ♗bd7 18.b3**. White has a stable advantage. *Eingorn* gradually increased it: **18...a5 19.♞c6 ♞b8 20.♞c2 ♞d8 21.♞fc1 ♗e8 22.♗e2 ♞c7 23.♞a6 ♞a7 24.♞d3 ♞c7 25.♗xc7 ♗xc7 26.♗e5! ♗xe5 27.dxe5**. White's next is **♗d4** and Black won't be able to protect pawns a5 and then b4.

● After **7...♗c6 8.e3 e6 9.♗d3 ♗d6** White must choose between **10.♗xd6 ♞xd6 11.♞c1**, or **10.a4!?** b4 (**10...♗xf4 11.axb5!**) **11.♗e2**, in both cases the first player is only marginally better. Considerably weaker is **10.♗g5?! h6 11.♗xf6 ♞xf6 12.♞c1 ♗d7!**

13.0-0 0-0 14.♗d2 ♗a5 Rogozenko-Saltaev, 's-Hertogenbosch 2003.

● **7...e6 8.e3**



8...♗d6 (less good is **8...♗e7 9.♗d3 ♗b7 10.0-0 0-0 – 10...♗c6 11.♞c1 0-0 12.a4 b4 13.♗b1 ♞b6 14.♗bd2** *Eingorn-Lendwai, Oberwart 2002 – 11.a4 b4 12.♗b1 ♗c6 13.♗bd2 ♗a5 14.♞e2* with a slight plus in *Zviagintsev-Bologan, New York 1997*) **9.♗xd6 (9.♗e5!?** **0-0 10.♗d3 ♗b7 – 10...♗bd7? 11.♗xf7! – 11.♗g5 ♗e7 12.0-0 ♗bd7 13.f4 ♗e4! 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.♗xe7 ♞xe7 16.♞c1 ♞ac8 17.♗xd7 ♞xd7** and in *Legky-Komliakov, Sevastopol 1997*, Black didn't have any real problems to hold the draw) **9...♞xd6 10.♗d3 ♗bd7 11.0-0 ♗b7 12.♗e2 0-0 13.a4 ♗c6 14.a5 ♗e4 15.♗f4 ♞ac8 16.♗e2 ♗b7 17.♗d3 ♞e7 18.♗d2 ♗d6 19.♗b3 ♗c4 20.♞a2 ♞c7 21.♗bc5 ♗xc5 22.♗xc5 ♞fc8 23.♗d3** White has a positional advantage, *Gareev-Krivobrodov, Kaluga 2003*.
Let us return to our main game after **5.h3 b5 6.c5**.

6...♗f5

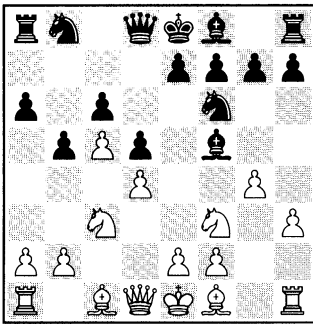
There are two alternatives:

– **6...♗e4** was never met in practice. After **7.a4!** the position looks better for White.

– **6...g6 7.♗f4 ♗g7 8.e3 0-0 9.♗d3 ♗fd7**. Here in the game *Braun-Murariu, Obrenovac 2004*, White played **10.b4 a5 11.a3 f6**

12.e4 axb4 13.axb4 ♖xal 14.♗xal e5
 15.♙e3 and now instead of 15...dxe4
 16.♘xe4 exd4 17.♙xd4 ♘e5 18.♙e2!±,
 Black should have started convenient com-
 plications with 15...f5. Therefore, stronger
 was the simple 10.0-0 with advantage. Now
 if 10...f6, then 11.e4! b4 (even worse is
 11...e5 12.♙e3 f5 13.exd5 e4 14.dxc6 ♘xc6
 15.♘xe4 fxe4 16.♙xe4±) 12.♘e2 e5
 13.♙g3 dxe4 14.♙xe4 f5 15.♙d3 e4
 16.♙c4+ ♖h8 17.♘d2. Black has serious
 problems with the development of the
 queenside. Besides, his position contains a
 lot of weaknesses.

7.g4!



It's a pity not to play this advance with tempo, even if 7.♙f4 is not a bad move either.

7...♙e4

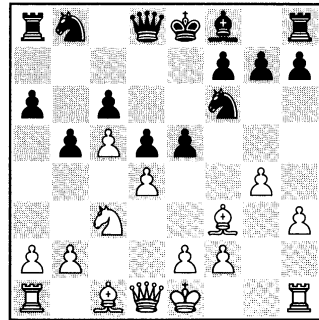
Practice has also seen 7...♙g6 8.♘e5!
 (8.♙g2 is just marginally better for White)
 8...♘fd7 9.♘xg6 hxg6 10.e4 e6 (10...b4
 11.♘xd5! cxd5 12.exd5 ♘f6 13.♙g2±)
 11.♙g2 ♙e7 12.0-0 ♖a7 13.♗d3 dxe4
 14.♗xe4 g5 15.f4± Lautier-Marzolo, Senat
 2003.

8.♙g2 ♙xf3

What else? White threatens 9.g5. For instance: 8...♘bd7 9.g5 ♘h5 10.♘xe4 dxe4 11.♘d2±. Or 8...g6 9.g5 ♙xf3 10.♙xf3 ♘fd7 11.e4, with a clear initiative.

9.exf3

Here 9.♙xf3 e5 also deserves attention



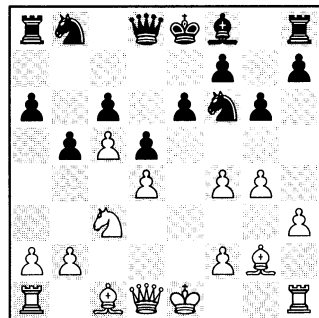
This advance of the e-pawn was the idea of my previous move. Without it Black is just clearly worse. Now White has at his disposal an interesting piece sacrifice, which I underestimated during the game: 10.dxe5 ♘fd7 11.♘xd5! cxd5 12.♗xd5 ♖a7 13.c6 ♙b4+ 14.♘f1 ♘b6 15.♗xd8+ ♘xd8 16.♙f4 ♖c7 17.♖c1 and White has excellent compensation for the piece.

9...e6

White is also slightly better after 9...g6 10.0-0 (10.♙f4!? ♙g7 11.♗d2 0-0 12.♙h6) 10...♙g7 11.♖e1.

10.f4 g6

White's advantage is out of the question after 10...h5 11.g5 ♘g8 12.f5! exf5 13.0-0. Maybe objectively best was 10...♙e7, hoping to hold an inferior position.



11.f5?!

This is a poor decision, helping Black to open the e-file for counterplay. 11.♙e3 seems more to the point. White has a space advantage, and although it is certainly not easy to break through Black's bastions, it is definitely the first player who has the better prospects. Black's problem in such positions is his lack of counterplay. The second player must mainly wait and try to be prepared for White's actions.

11...exf5 12.gxf5 ♙g7 13.♙e3 0-0

Black is doing okay here. From the opening point of view the rest is not really relevant, since White could have achieved an advantage earlier.

14.♚f3

Or 14.♚d2!? ♜e8 15.0-0-0 unclear.

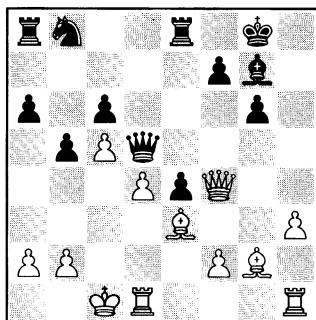
14...♜e8

Weaker is 14...♘e4?! 15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♚xe4 ♜e8 17.♚d3 ♚xd4 18.♚xd4 ♙xd4 19.0-0-0 ♙xe3+ 20.fxe3 and Black remains with an undeveloped queenside.

15.0-0-0 ♘e4!? 16.fxg6 hxg6

More solid was 16...fxg6!? with the idea ...♜a7-f7, but during the game I felt that Black is able to create counterplay after White starts to advance the h-pawn.

17.♘xe4 dxe4 18.♚f4 ♚d5



19.h4

Double-edged is 19.♙b1 ♘d7 20.h4 ♘f6.

19...♘d7 20.h5 gxh5!

Far better than 20...♘xc5? 21.hxg6 fxg6 22.dxc5 ♚xa2 23.♚d6! ♚xb2+ 24.♙d1 ♚ad8 25.♙d2±.

21.♚dg1

This is superficial and without concrete support. Correct was 21.♙b1 ♘f8 22.♚h4=.

21...♘f8 22.♙h3 ♘g6 23.♚f5?

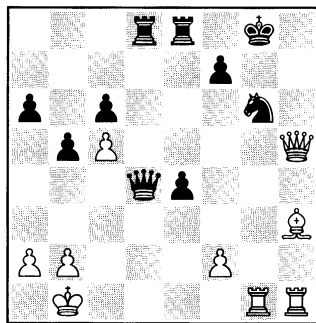
The last chance to hold the balance was 23.♚g5 ♚xg5 24.♚xg5 ♚ad8 25.♙f5 ♙xd4 26.♙xg6 fxg6 27.♚xg6+ ♙f7 28.♚xc6 ♜e5.

23...♚ad8!±

After this precise move bringing the last piece into play, Black's advantage is clear. 23...♚xa2 24.♚xh5 ♚ad8 25.♙f5 ♚c4+ 26.♙b1 ♚d3+ 27.♙a1 ♚xd4 28.♙xd4 ♚xd4 29.♚e2 ♘f4 30.♚c2 was far from clear to me, due to the open g- and h-files. Unfortunately it took me too much time to figure out the most precise continuations.

24.♙b1 ♙xd4 25.♙xd4 ♚xd4

26.♚xh5



26...♚f6??

A silly blunder in time-trouble. After the simple 26...♚g7 with the same threat of 27...♚d2, White must play 27.♚e2 (other moves lose at once: 27.♙f5 ♚d2-+; 27.♚d1 ♘f4 28.♚h4 ♚xd1+ 29.♚xd1 ♘d3-+), but after 27...♚d5 with a pawn up and no real attack for White the position is technically winning for Black.

27.♙f5 ♖d2 28.♜h7+

This is the difference. The queen on g7 would have protected against this check, which for some strange reason I thought was completely harmless. Maybe this is the right place to recall that years ago, during our training hours, Chebanenko would lose any interest and he even used to stop analysing the games if he knew that I had been in time trouble. He used to say: 'In time-trouble one does not think normally, so I see no point to search for reasonable explanations of the mistakes. As a result I see no point of watching it at all'. I brought up this episode in order to avoid any other explanation for the lack of detailed comments of the remaining part of the game. Black is now dead lost.

28...♙f8 29.♜h6+ ♙g8 30.♜xd2 ♜xf5 31.♜h6 e3+? 32.♙a1 ♜f6

I was about to get mated after 32...exf2 33.♜h8 mate.

33.fxe3 ♖e5 34.♜h3 ♖e6

Another nice mate on h8 exploiting the pin on the g-file is: 34...♜xc5 35.♜c8+ ♙g7 36.♜h8 mate.

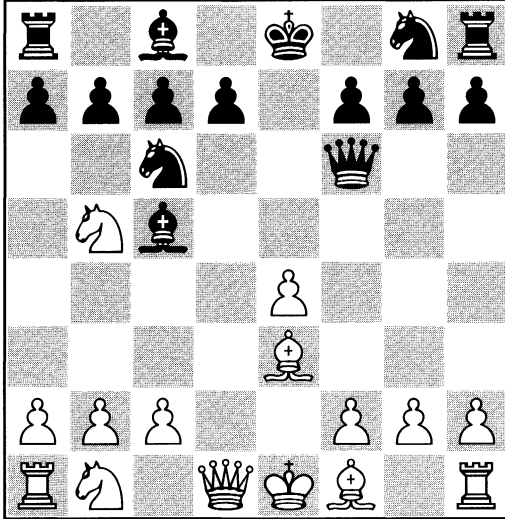
35.♖f1 ♜g7 36.♜f5 a5 37.♜g5 a4 38.♖d1 ♖e8 39.♖d8 ♖xd8 40.♜xd8+ ♙f8 41.a3 ♜g2 42.♖d1 ♙g7 43.♜d4+ ♙g8 44.e4 ♜c2 45.♖f1! ♙g6 46.♜d8+ ♙h7 47.♖xf7+ ♙h6 48.♜d4 ♜c1+ 49.♙a2 ♜g5 50.♜g7+ 1-0

In conclusion, sometimes a good waiting move can be well met by another waiting answer. Not only can you pass the ball back into your opponent's court. What is more, you can also hide your aggressive intentions very well (just look at those possible mates at the end of my game versus Nielsen). And yes, the move 5.h3 clearly contains the element of surprise as well. Can you expect more from a single marginal pawn advance on move 5?

CHAPTER 7

Jeroen Bosch

Surprise in the Scotch



Play the Blumenfeld Attack – 6. ♖b5

This chapter features a surprise weapon for White in the Scotch versus 4... ♖c5. The word ‘surprise’ is not necessarily synonymous with ‘novel’, of course. The whole line was first played by Blumenfeld over a century ago! It was popular in the first decade of the 20th century, only to fall into neglect for the next 80 years or so. Recently Blumenfeld’s idea was taken up by grandmasters Zelic and Nataf. Subsequently, even Ponomarev has given it a try.

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♗c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗xd4 ♖c5 5.♖e3

Here 5.♗xc6 is the other main line. While 5.♗b3 used to be popular, it is hardly played

these days. Neither is 5.♗f5 for that matter.

5... ♖f6

Lasker’s suggestion of 5... ♖b6 is a (minor) alternative here, when 6.♗f5 is widely acknowledged to yield White an edge. After the text White’s usual response is 6.c3. However, why not attack your opponent head-on?

6.♗b5!?

This is called the Blumenfeld Attack by Estrin and Panov, probably because of the game Blumenfeld-W.Cohn, Berlin 1903/04. White accepts a serious structural weakness – isolated doubled pawns – in return for a lasting initiative. Blumenfeld was a strong

master, but on the whole it is not his chess games for which he is remembered by the chess world. He made important contributions to the field of opening theory. Think of the Blumenfeld Gambit: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♟f3 c5 4.d5 b5, and also of the Blumenfeld Attack in the Meran: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♟f3 ♟f6 4.♟c3 e6 5.e3 ♟bd7 6.♟d3 dxc4 7.♟xc4 b5 8.♟d3 a6 9.e4 c5 10.e5 cxd4 11.♟xb5. Blumenfeld is also known for his research into the psychological aspects of our game. Chess trainers all over the world advise their impatient or blunder-prone pupils to first write down their move on the score sheet, to double-check it for gross mistakes, and only then to execute it on the board. Sensible advice, first formulated by Blumenfeld and therefore rightly known as 'Blumenfeld's rule'. Coming back to 6.♟b5, this move (just as Blumenfeld's other opening variations) starts major complications right from the start. Play has an open, tactical character which ought to suit the player of the Scotch.

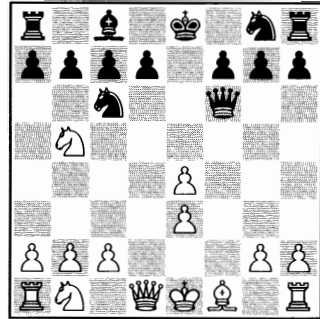
6...♟xe3

The only natural response to White's audacious knight move. There is a practical example with 6...♟b4+: 7.♟d2 ♟xd2+ 8.♟xd2 ♟e5 (8...♟d8 9.♟g4) 9.♟d3 ♟d4? 10.♟c4 ♟c5 11.b4!, and White won in Hari-Drozg, Slovenia 1996. However, Black could have put up some serious resistance now with 11...♟xb4+ 12.c3 ♟xb5 13.♟d6+ cxd6 14.♟xb5 ♟xb5. In answer to the check I would recommend 7.c3 ♟a5 8.♟d2 a6 9.♟a3!?, which is very pleasant for White.

7.fxе3

The isolated doubled e-pawns look extremely ugly. Indeed, in an ending White's pawn structure would be a very serious deficit. Still, in a middlegame there are also some positive features connected to the e3-e4 pawn set-up. The white pieces may find useful strongholds in the centre on the

squares d4, d5, f4 and f5. Moreover, the half-open d- and f-file may be used to good effect. The direct threat of 8.♟xc7 forces Black to make up his mind. Should he protect c7 (and how?), or should he counter-attack with 7...♟h4+ and 8...♟xe4? Unattractive, by the way, is 7...♟xb2?! 8.♟1c3! ♟b4 9.♟xc7+ ♟d8 10.♟d2±.



We will investigate:

- A) 7...♟d8
- B) 7...♟d8
- C) 7...♟e5
- D) 7...♟h4+

Variation A

7...♟d8

Postponing his decision about where to move the queen. Black reasons that he will have to defend c7 with his king anyway (which is indeed true in some lines). Still, it means giving up the right to castle as early as move 7!

8.♟1c3 ♟ge7

Not, of course, 8...a6? 9.♟xc7+—.

9.♟f3!?

Now that Black has moved his g8 knight White proposes a queen swap, either to improve his own structure (gxf3) or to fracture his opponent's (gxf6).

Less good is 9.♟c4, although in the game

Gantner-Manz, Germany 1991/92, interesting complications arose after 9...d6 10.♖d2 ♘e5 11.♙e2 ♙e6 12.♗xc7!? ♘xc7 13.♗b5+ ♘d8 14.♖xd6+ ♙d7 (14...♗d7 15.♖c7+ ♘e8 16.0-0-0±) 15.♖c7+ ♘e8 16.♗d6+ ♘f8 17.♚fl ♖e6 18.♗xf7!? ♗xf7 19.♚d1. Black could now have won with 19...♙c6. After the game continuation 19...♙c8? White could have landed a spectacular blow with 20.♚xd7!+- (instead of 20.♖xd7).

A serious alternative, though, is **9.♖d2!?**. In the game N.Kosintseva-Petrukhin, Dagomys 2003, Black now played the loosening 9...a6 10.♗d4 b5?! when after 11.0-0-0 ♗e5 12.♙e2 d6 13.♚hf1 ♖h6 14.♗f3 ♗g4 White correctly invested some material with 15.e5! ♗xe3 16.exd6 cxd6 17.♗g5! ♗xf1 18.♚xf1 ♙e6 19.♗ce4 with a winning attack.

Preferable – after 9.♖d2 a6 10.♗d4 – is 10...♗e5 11.0-0-0 d6 12.♙e2 with a balanced position. Black's king will stay in the centre for some time to come, meaning that White has definite attacking chances. On the other hand, Black is pretty solid and has some long-term advantages.

9...♖h4+

White has a pleasant ending after 9...♖xf3 10.gxf3. The game Gaponenko-Stiazhkina, Belgrade 2001, continued 10...d6 11.♚g1 g6 12.0-0-0 a6 13.♗d4 ♗xd4 14.♚xd4 (14.exd4!?) 14...♙e6 15.f4 f6 16.♚d2 ♘e8 17.♙g2 ♚b8 18.♙f3 ♘f7 19.h4±.

Perhaps Black should opt for the ending after 9...d6!? 10.♙e2?! ♗e5 11.♖xf6 gxf6 12.0-0 f5 as in Remmler-Korneev, Böblingen 2003.

10.g3 ♖h6 11.♖f4!

White nevertheless succeeds in exchanging the queens under favourable circumstances.

11...♖xf4 12.gxf4 a6 13.♗d4 ♗xd4 14.exd4

And White had a slight edge in Kecic-Milosevic, Kranj 1999.

Variation B

7...♖d8

Defending c7 with the queen without interpolating the check on h4 (line D2) is less logical.

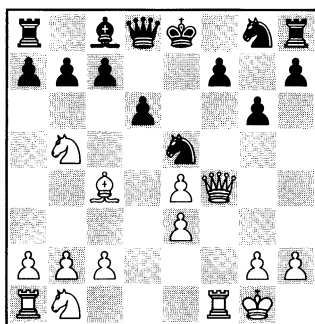
8.♖g4 g6?!

This is the most popular move in practice. Worse than the text is 8...♗f6? 9.♗xc7+! ♖xc7 10.♖xg7 ♚g8 11.♖xf6 ♗b4 12.♗a3 and White was clearly better in Mieses-Lester, London 1944. However, the alternative 8...♘f8 is probably a lot stronger. Black does not weaken the dark squares, which eases his defensive task. Chances are probably about equal. For example, 9.♖f4 d6 10.♗lc3 a6 11.♗d4 ♗e5 12.0-0-0 ♗f6=, Farah-Bielicki, Buenos Aires 1992.

9.♖f4 d6 10.♙c4 ♗e5

Bad is 10...♗f6? 11.0-0 ♗e5 12.♖xf6 ♖xf6 13.♚xf6±, Schneider-Spranger, Oberhof 1998.

11.0-0



11...♖d7

The only move in this difficult position for Black. However, as the queen will have to move later on, (she is clearly obstructing Black's development) this move involves a further loss of tempo. To illustrate the problems that Black is facing:

– 11...♙e6 12.♙xe6 fxe6 13.♗lc3± (immediately winning is 13.♗xc7+! ♖xc7 14.♖f8+ ♘d7 15.♖xa8+-) 13...♘d7?

14.♖ad1 ♗c8 15.♜xe5 1-0, Blumenfeld-Helbach, St Petersburg 1905.
 – 11...♞e7 12.♗1c3 c6 (not much better is 12...g5 13.♞f2 c6 14.♙xf7+ ♗d7 15.♗d4± R.Swinkels-De Vreugt, Hooegeveen 2004)
 13.♗xd6+ (13.♙xf7+ is also completely winning) 13...♞xd6 14.♙xf7+ ♗e7 15.♞h4+ ♗f8 16.♙xg8+ ♗xg8 17.♖ad1 ♞e6 18.♖d8+ ♗g7 19.♙xh8 ♗xh8 20.♞d8+ 1-0, Batkovic-Jevtic, Belgrade 1993.

12.♗1a3!

Keeping the momentum, and therefore stronger than 12.♙e2 a6 13.♗d4 ♞e7 14.♗c3 ♙e6 15.♗d5 ♙xd5 16.exd5 h5 17.♗f3 ♗xf3+ 18.♙xf3 ♗h6 19.♞a4+, Gaponenko-Maric, Vrnjacka Banja 1996. Although in that case White keeps some advantage too.

Equally good as the text-move, though, is **12.♗d2** as Zelic played against Abbas at the 2004 Olympiad in Calvia. White won convincingly after 12...h5 13.♗c3 ♖h7 14.♙b3 ♞g4 15.♗d5! ♗d8 16.♗f6 ♗xf6 (16...♞xf4 17.exf4 ♗xf6 18.fxe5+-) 17.♞xf6+ ♗e8 18.♗f3! ♗xf3+ 19.♙xf3 ♞d7 20.♖af1 ♞e7 21.♙xf7+ and Black resigned.

12...a6

Clearly, 12...♗xc4 13.♗xc4 leaves Black defenceless against the menacing threats on d6 and c7.

While, the immediate 12...♞e7 fails to 13.♙xf7+! ♗xf7 14.♗xc7+ ♞xc7 15.♗b5 ♞e7 16.♞xf7+ ♞xf7 17.♗xd6+ ♗e7 18.♗xf7 ♙e6 19.♗xh8 ♗f6 20.♗xg6+ and White's rook and four(!) pawns are stronger than the two pieces.

13.♗d4 ♞e7 14.♗f3

Ready to exchange an important defender.

14...♗xc4 15.♗xc4

White's enormous lead in development now gives him the edge. Zelic won convincingly after:

15...♙e6 16.e5! dxe5 17.♗cxe5 0-0-0 18.♗d4 f6 19.♗ec6! bxc6 20.♗xc6 ♞c5 21.♗xd8 ♗xd8 22.♖ad1+ ♗e7 23.♖d3 g5 24.♞f3 ♞e5 25.♞a8 ♙d7 26.♖fd1 ♙e8 27.♖c3 ♗f7 28.♞xa6 c6 29.♞c4+ ♗g7 30.♞d4+- ♙e6 31.a4 ♗e7 32.♞d6 ♞xd6 33.♙xd6 ♗d5 34.♖b3 ♙f7 35.♖b7 ♗g6 36.e4 ♗e3 37.e5 ♙d5 38.♙xf6+ ♗h5 39.a5 ♗xg2 40.a6 ♗e1 41.a7 1-0

Zelic-Kuba, Pula 2003.

Variation C

7...♞e5

This is Bronstein's move.

8.♞d5

This move forces Black to protect c7 with his king, and, therefore, looks strong. Still, Black is often forced to play ♗d8 at some point anyway. In any case, there are clearly some interesting alternatives at this stage:

● No good is 8.♗1c3?! after both 8...a6 9.♗d4 ♗f6 10.♗xc6 dxc6 11.♞d4 ♞e7± Oksanen-Rautio, Finland 1999/00, and 8...♗f6 9.♞f3 a6 10.♗a3 d6 11.♗c4 ♞e7 12.h3 0-0 Mammola-Masera, Sottomarina 1973, White has no compensation whatsoever for his structural deficit.

● In practice White has also been successful with moving the knight to the edge of the board with 8.♗1a3?! ♗ce7?! 9.♗c4 ♞c5 10.c3 d6 11.b4 ♞c6 12.♞d4 ♗f6 13.♗a5 ♞d7 14.e5! ♗f5 15.♞f4 ♗h5 16.♞f3± Stannov-Pancevski, Skopje 1998. However, in reply to 8.♗1a3 the customary 8...♗d8 looks stronger.

● 8.♗d2 ♗d8 (not 8...♗f6 9.♗c4!+-) and now the lines fork:

– 9.♗c3 ♗f6 10.♞f3 d6 11.h3 ♙e6 12.0-0-0 ♞c5 (12...♖e8 13.♙b5 a6 14.♙xc6 bxc6 15.♞f4 ♙d7 16.♞h4 ♞h5 was Lipman-Averbakh, Moscow 1978) 13.♞f4 ♗e5 14.♗b1 ♗e7 15.♗f3 ♗g6 16.♞g5

♖xg5 17.♘xg5 c6̄ Ruotanen-Peretjat-kowicz, cr 1973.

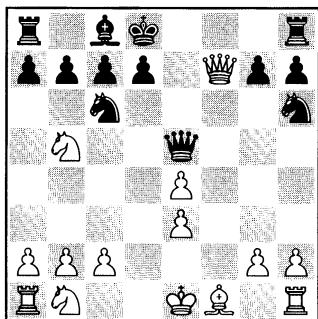
– 9.♙d3 looks stronger, after 9...♗f6 10.0-0 d6 11.♗f3 ♖e7 (11...♗xb2? 12.♚b1 ♖xa2 13.e5!) 12.♖e1 ♙d7 13.♗g3 Pinkas-Sokolov, Lublin 1974, White keeps the initiative, according to Gutman. The more recent Predojevic-Tomashevsky, Halkidiki 2003, went 9...♗h6 10.0-0 b6 11.♖e1 f6 12.♗f3 ♖e7 13.♗c3 ♗e5 14.♗d5 ♖d6 15.♗g3.

8...♗d8 9.♖xf7

Alternatively, 9.♗1c3!? may also be investigated. For example, 9...♗f6 (9...♗h6!?) 10.♖xf7 ♗xe4 (10...♗g5 11.0-0-0 and Black's king will be stuck in the centre for a long time) 11.♗xe4 ♖xe4 12.0-0-0 (12.♖xg7 ♖xe3+ 13.♙e2 ♚e8 14.♖f6+ ♚e7 15.♖h8+ is a draw) 12...♖e7 (12...♖xe3+ 13.♗b1 will only make matters worse, as White can use the open e-file for his attack as well) 13.♖f4 d6 14.♙d3 ♗e5 15.♚h1 ♙d7 16.♗d4 g6 17.♗f3 ♚f8?! 18.♖b4 ♗c6 19.♖xb7 ♚b8 20.♖a6 ♚b6 21.♖a3 ♖xe3+ 22.♗b1 ♙f5? 23.♗h4 a5? 24.♚fe1 ♖g5 25.♙xf5 ♖xh4 26.♚xd6+ 1-0 Kecic-Tavcar, Ljubljana 1998.

9...♗h6

This is stronger than 9...♗ge7 10.♗1c3 a6 11.♗a3 b5 12.0-0-0 d6 13.♖f3 ♙e6 14.♗d5 ♙xd5 15.exd5 ♗a5 16.♖f4!? ♗g6 17.♖xe5 ♗xe5 18.♙e2 ♗e7 19.b4!± Bontempi-Taccalati, Italy 1996.



After the text Black gets a counterattack, according to an analysis by Estrin and Panov. However, after

10.♖f4!

White can at the cost of some material take over the attack. The game Stöcker-Nowack, Schleswig Holstein 1996, continued quite romantically with

10...♖xb2 11.♖xc7+ ♗e8 12.♗1c3!?

Here 12.♖d6 ♖xa1 13.♗c7+ ♗d8 14.♗e6+ draws.

12...♖xa1+ 13.♗d2 ♗f7 14.♖f4! ♗f8

Equally bad is 14...♗ce5 15.♗d6+! ♗e7 16.♗xf7 ♗xf7 17.♙c4 ♖xh1 18.♖xf7+ ♗d8 19.♖xg7, winning. In my opinion 14...♗fe5! with a very unclear position is best.

15.♗d6

Also winning is 15.♙c4.

15...♗e5 16.♗xf7 ♗g6

Or 16...♗xf7 17.♙c4+-.

17.♖d6+ ♗g8 18.♙c4 h6 19.♗g5

Mate.

Variation D

7...♖h4+

The main line.

8.g3

Now the lines fork:

D1) 8...♖xe4

D2) 8...♖d8

Variation D1

8...♖xe4 9.♗xc7+

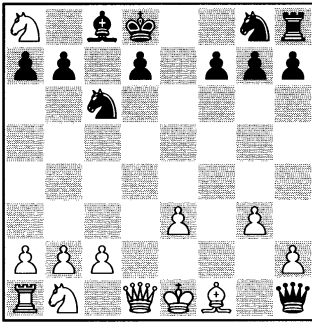
White should take the rook now, for after 9.♗1c3 ♖xh1 10.♗xc7+ ♗d8 11.♖d6 ♗f6 12.♗xa8 there is Fine's recommendation of 12...♖f3! to consider. Instead, 12...♗e8?! proved less good in Blackburne-Ward, London 1907. White won after 13.♖f4 f6 14.0-0-0 ♗e5 15.♗d5 ♖xh2 16.♙b5 ♗c6 17.♗ac7 ♖h6 18.♗e6+! dxe6 19.♗b6+ ♗e7

20. ♖xc8+ ♜f8 21. ♖f3 ♖e5 22. ♖e4 ♖g6
23. ♖b4+ 1-0.

9... ♖d8

As always the king should go to d8. After
9... ♜f8? 10. ♖xa8 ♖xh1 11. ♖d2 h5 12. ♖c3
h4 13. 0-0-0 ♖f3 14. ♖g2 ♖g4 15. ♖d6+
♖ge7 16. ♖c7 d6 17. ♖xd6 g6, Müller-
Stockfleth, Hamburg 1989, White gets a
winning advantage with 18. ♖d8+! ♜g7
19. ♖xh8 ♜xh8 20. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 21. ♖xf7.

10. ♖xa8 ♖xh1



So after a mere 10 moves we have reached a position that is completely unclear, and might just as well have been played in the 19th century. Material is equal, Black's king is worse placed than White's. White's knight on a8 is trapped, but it could also turn out to be a major asset in a direct attack (square c7!).

11. ♖d6

The most popular move, and it sure looks logical. A recent but dubious attempt is 11. ♖d2?! when after 11... ♖e4 12. ♖c3 ♖e5 13. 0-0-0 ♖f6 14. ♖b5 ♖e8 15. ♖d6 ♖e7 16. ♖g2 ♖e8 17. ♖c4 ♖c5 18. ♖c3 b5! 19. ♖xc6 bxc4 Black was winning in N. Kosintseva-Velcheva, Istanbul 2003.

Worthy of serious attention though is **11. ♖g4!?**. The attack on g7 is rather annoying for the second player.

- White gets a superior ending after

11... ♖d5? 12. ♖xg7 ♖e5 13. ♖f8+ ♖e8
14. ♖xe8+ ♜xe8 15. ♖c7+ Benderac-
Drljevic, Herceg Novi 2001.

- 11... g6 also looks weak after 12. ♖d2
♖xh2 13. 0-0-0 ♖h5 14. ♖f4 ♖e5 15. ♖xf7
♖ge7 16. ♖c4 ♖b8 17. ♖d6 ♖xa8 18. ♖f6
♖g8 19. ♖c4+- Godani-Duarte, Pontremoli
1998.

Black has some stronger moves at his disposal though:

- Langer-Kamberi, Oklahoma 2003, ended in a repetition after 11... ♖g1 12. ♖xg7
♖xe3+ 13. ♖e2 ♖g1+ 14. ♖f1 ♖e3+ and so on.

- Also interesting is 11... ♖ge7 12. ♖c3
(12. ♖xg7 ♖g8↑) 12... ♖xh2 13. 0-0-0 h5
14. ♖f4 h4, which is given by some sources as better for Black. However, it seems to me that 15. ♖e4! gives White a tremendous attack. Instead of 12... ♖xh2 Black should prefer my suggestion (in NIC Magazine 2003/7) of 12... ♖e5!?. This was tested in R. Swinkels-Hallebeek, Eindhoven 2004: 13. ♖xg7 ♖f3+ 14. ♜f2 ♖g8 15. ♖xh7 ♖xh2 16. ♖e4 ♖g4+ 17. ♜e2, and now according to Hallebeek best was 17... ♖h2+ planning 18. ♖g2? ♖f5! and 18. ♖g2 b6!.

11... ♖f6 12. ♖d2!

This time there are no playable alternatives. There is no time to pull the knight back: 12. ♖c7? ♖f3 13. ♖c3 ♖xe3+ 14. ♖e2 ♖d4 15. ♖b5 ♖f3+ 0-1 Penillas Mendez-Prieto, Asturias 1998. Also bad is 12. ♖c7+ ♜e7 13. ♖c3 ♖f3 14. e4 ♖e8 15. ♖d1 ♖xe4+ Haapaniemi-Pitkanen, Helsinki 2000. While 12. ♖c3 ♖f3+ was an old analysis by Keres. In all these lines ♖f3 is the key counter-attacking move, which is why 12. ♖d2 is necessary.

White is now ready to castle queenside leaving Black two possibilities:

D11) 12... ♖e8

D12) 12... ♖e4

Variation D11

12...♟e8

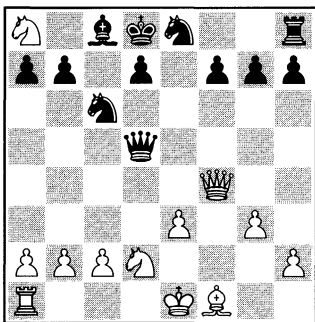
According to an analysis by Estrin and Panov, Black is better now. This verdict turns out to be too optimistic. The text defends the important c7 square. Here is what happens if White is given free rein:

– 12...♞e8 13.0-0-0 ♖d5 14.♗c7+ ♘e7 15.♟c4 ♖c5 16.♞d6+- Haapaniemi-Tuomala, Finland 1986.

– 12...♖d5 13.♗c7+ ♘e7 14.0-0-0 ♖e5?! (14...♖c5!?) 15.♙g2 ♞e8 Hallebeek) 15.♟c4 ♗xc7 16.♟xc7 ♠d8 17.♞d6± Janz-Von Rahden, Binz 1995.

13.♗f4 ♖d5

Keres ended his analysis here, opining that Black was better. More recently Gutman has argued that the opposite is true! Instead of Keres' move, 13...♗xh2 14.0-0-0 ♗h6, Crespo-Pock, cr 2000, also merits attention.



14.0-0-0!

Not fearing 14...♗xa2! White is losing the trapped knight after 14.♟c4? ♖e5 15.0-0-0 ♗xf4 16.exf4 b6 17.♙xf7 ♙b7 18.♞xb6 axb6+- Bucan-Bogic, Yugoslavia cr 1983.

14...♖e5

For after 14...♗xa2 15.♟b3!, and the Black queen is merely trapped on a2: 15...♟a5? fails to 16.♗g5+.

15.♟f3

White won in Guez-Lebon, Bethune 2004,

with the direct 15.♗xf7 ♖b8 16.♟e4 ♟e5? (16...♗xa8 17.♙h3+-) 17.♗f4+-.

15...♗xf4 16.exf4 f6 17.♟d4

This is rightly given by Gutman as advantageous for White, as Black has no way of winning the a8 knight.

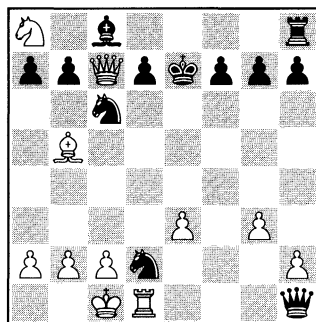
Variation D12

12...♟e4!

Play now assumes a forced character.

13.♗c7+ ♘e7 14.0-0-0 ♟xd2 15.♙b5!

If it wasn't for this move White would be in serious trouble. However, this has been known for more than 50 years now.



15...♗e4!

This is Gutman's discovery, which appears to save the entire line for Black. Turning 12...♟e4? into 12...♟e4! so to speak. Thus Black is inferior after both:

– 15...♗xh2 16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♖e5+ ♘d8 18.♗c7+ ♘e7 19.♖e5+ ♘d8 20.♗xg7±

– 15...♖d5 16.♙xc6 bxc6, and now White must realize that there is no hurry to recapture on d2, with 17.♗xa7!±. Instead the game Mieses-Sergeant, Hastings 1945/46, went 17.♠xd2 ♖c5 18.♠d4 f6 19.b4 ♖c3 20.♞e4+ ♘f7 21.♗xa7 ♞e8 22.♞xe8 ♖e1+ 23.♘b2 ♗xb4+ 24.♘c1 ♖e1+ 25.♘b2 ♖b4+ 26.♘c1 1/2-1/2.

16.♙xc6 bxc6 17.♠xd2 ♖xe3

18.♖d6+ ♔d8 19.♗c7+

with a draw by perpetual is Gutman's main line.

If this analysis of 12...♗e4 is correct (and it is quite possible that discoveries can be made here), then White should turn his attention to 11.♗g4, as given above.

Variation D2

8...♗d8

Naturally this must be compared to the immediate 7...♗d8 (line B).

9.♗g4

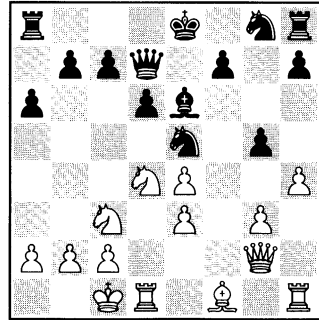
Here 9.♗1c3 a6 10.♗d4 ♗e5 11.♖g2 d6 12.0-0 was Nimzowitsch-Spielmann, München 1905. According to ECO play would have been equal after 12...♗e7. Actually, Black's position looks just better. White has no tactical chances to make up for his structural deficits.

9...♗f8

Again it is better to avoid weakening the dark squares. After **9...g6** 10.♗f4 d6 11.♖c4 ♗e6 (11...♗e5? 12.0-0 ♗e7 13.♗1c3 c6 14.♖xf7+ – or 14.♗xd6+ – 1-0 Berndtsson Kullberg-Bengtsson, Copenhagen 1916. This win is identical to that in the line with 7...♗d8) 12.♖xe6 fxe6 13.0-0 ♗ge7 14.♗1c3 (this is better than 14.♗f7+ ♗d7 15.♖f6? – 15.♗d4 – 15...♗g8 16.♗c3 ♗xf7 17.♖xf7 ♗e5 ≠ Miesses-Johner, Berlin 1924) 14...♗e5 15.♗f6 ♗d7 16.♗d4 ♗g8 17.♗cb5 ♗7c6 18.♗xc6 bxc6 19.♖ad1! ♖f8 20.♗xe5 ♖xf1+ 21.♗xf1 ♗f7+ (21...cxb5 22.♗xb5+ ♗e7 23.e5±) 22.♗g2 ♖f8 23.♗xd6 ♗f3+ 24.♗h3 ♗±xd1 25.♗g7+ ♗xd6 26.♗xf8+ Spielmann-Rubinstein, Stockholm 1919, and White won this queen ending easily.

However, there is something to be said for Godena's **9...g5!?**. By moving the g-pawn two steps forward Black not only defends against the threat on g7, but he also takes the important f4-square from White's queen.

After 10.♗1c3 d6 11.♗e2 a6 12.♗d4 ♗e5 13.♗g2 (13.♗f5) 13...♖e6 14.0-0 ♗d7 15.h4 Black faces a difficult choice. Should he move forward with the g-pawn or take on h4?

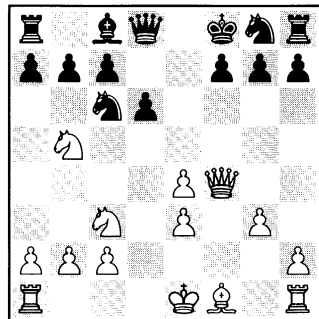


● 15...g4 16.♖e2 0-0-0 17.♗d5 ♖xd5 18.exd5 ♗e7 19.♖hfl h5 20.e4± Predojevic-Kizov, Belgrade 2004.

● 15...g4 16.gxh4 ♖g4 (Godena gives 16...0-0-0 17.♗g7 ♗e7 18.♗xe6 fxe6 19.♖h3 ♗7g6 as about equal) 17.♖e2 ♗e7 with fairly even chances in Ponomariov-Godena, Plovdiv tt 2003.

10.♗f4 d6 11.♗1c3

Stronger than the immediate 11.♖c4 ♗e5 12.0-0 ♗h6 (12...♗f6=) 13.♖b3 ♖h3 14.♗1c3!? ♖xf1 15.♖xf1 as in Blumenfeld-W.Cohn, Berlin City Championship 1903/04, the stem game of the 6.♗b5 line.



11...♟g7

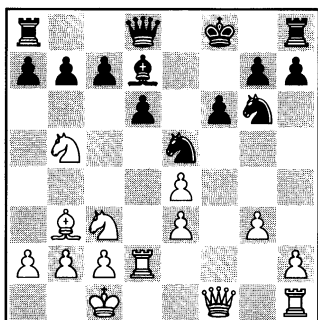
This is an unfortunate idea. In general Black should place his knights on e5 and f6. The game Bernstein-Swidorski, Ostend 1907, went instead: 11...♞e5 12.0-0-0. The point of 11.♞1c3 is that White will castle queenside rather than kingside. After 12...♟g4 13.♞e2 h5 14.♟xg4 hxg4 15.♞d5 the white knights are taking up a menacing position: 15...g5 16.♟f5 ♞h6 17.♟f2 c6 18.♞dc7 ♟g7 19.♞xa8 cxb5 20.♞hf1 ♟h7 21.♟e2 ♟e7 22.♞b6 axb6 23.♟xb5 ♟c7 24.♞f6 ♟g7? 25.♞fxd6 ♞c8?? 26.♟xe5+ 1-0.

However, readers might like to investigate 11...a6 12.♞d4 ♞e5 13.0-0-0 ♞f6 14.♞e2, which is given as equal by Gutman. Instead of the last move, 14.h3! is a minor improvement.

12.♞c4 f6

Preparing ♞g6, but Black is going to regret the weakening of the diagonal a2-g8. After 12...♞e5 13.♞b3 White also has a pleasant edge.

13.0-0-0 ♞g6 14.♟f1 ♞ce5 15.♞b3 ♟g4 16.♞d2 ♟d7



Black's single pride and joy is the stronghold on e5, but to adapt an aphorism of Tarrasch: one strong square does not make for a strong position.

17.h3! h5

Otherwise White just goes g4.

18.♞d4 c6 19.♞f5

All these knight jumps demonstrate the advantages of the e3-e4 structure.

19...♟xf5 20.exf5 ♞e7 21.e4

Now White has a huge edge. The Black king is in mortal danger.

21...a5 22.♞e6 ♟c7 23.g4 g5? 24.h4!

What follows is a massacre.

24...gxh4

Also losing is 24...♞xg4 25.hxg5 fxg5 26.f6 ♞g6 27.♟xg4 hxg4 28.♞xh8+ ♞xh8 29.♟f5.

25.♞xh4 ♟b6 26.♞d1

Not even allowing Black the pleasure of ♟e3.

26...♟g7 27.gxh5 ♟h7 28.♞g2 ♞hg8 29.♞g6!

In such a position good moves are easy to find. Naturally just taking the rook also wins.

29...♟d8 30.♟f4 ♟f8 31.♞h2 ♞h8

32.♞e3 ♞e8 33.♞hg2 ♞5xg6

34.fxg6+ ♟g7 35.♞h2 f5 36.exf5

♞xg6 37.f6+ 1-0

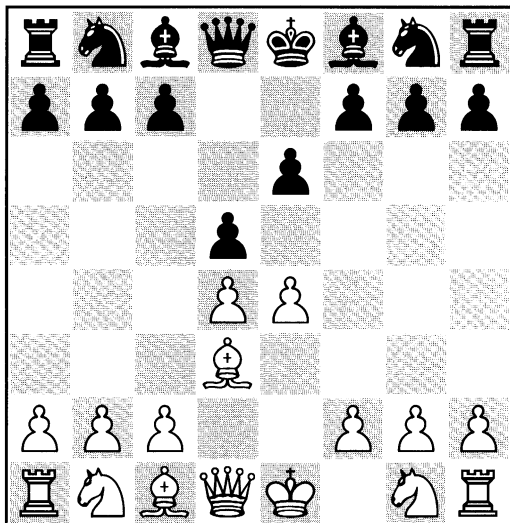
Nataf-Onischuk, Montreal 2003.

So the next time you are facing this line of the Scotch, write down the move 6.♞b5 on your score sheet, think of Blumenfeld, and play it!

CHAPTER 8

Mark Bluvshstein

Out of the French Book



1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d3

Doesn't it sometimes feel as if there is so much theory to know, and even if you know it there doesn't seem to be any advantage for White? This was my feeling about the French Defence. Every time I play it I need to know tons of theory, which is supposed to bring an advantage that is hardly discernible. The line with 3.♘d3 has never been seriously analyzed until this article. I am the only player in the world who plays this line on a regular basis against top class opposition. Most of the ideas are shown in my games, but the credit should go to my former trainer Yuri Ochkoos who showed this line to me with confidence. He introduced me to it and tested most of our analysis himself. The best

thing about this line from my point of view is that everything is to be solved over the board. No real analysis has been done in this line. Games in this line always become entertaining in no time! I am not a fan of theory, never was. I enjoy playing chess in unfamiliar territory for both players. Surprisingly, this line has brought me unbelievable success in important games. Hope you enjoy!

Clearly, 3.♘d3 is a very rare move, but it is connected with several positional ideas. White will castle kingside as soon as possible. The bishop move does not block any pieces, and is a standard developing move.

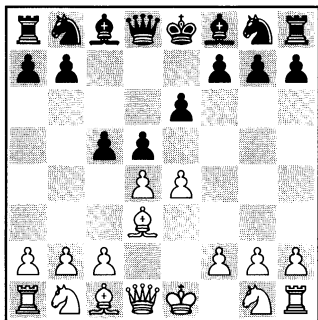
In contrast, 3.♘d2 for example blocks the dark squared bishop, which does not make much sense. With 3.♙d3 you keep your options open. At first, this move does not seem to make much sense due to dxe4 followed by ♘f6, thus Black gains time in development. However, it is not so simple, as the light-squared bishop on the long diagonal is controlling the board. This is a great line to surprise Black. Every French player has played the ♘c3 and ♘d2 lines hundreds of times, while the quiet ♙d3 line immediately takes the opposition out of book, on move 3!

By the way, the natural 3...♘f6 is no good, for, after 3...♘f6 4.e5 ♘f7 5.♘f3 c5 6.c3, White is significantly better positioned in comparison to similar lines in the Advance Variation or the Tarrasch Variation.

Studying the following illustrative games is all you need to play 3.♙d3 confidently in your next game.

- Mark Bluvshstein
 - Jean-Marc Degraeve
- Montreal 2002

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♙d3 c5



Black is trying to overtake the initiative. The

idea is to make the bishop on d3 feel misplaced as quickly as possible.

4.c3 ♘c6 5.♘e2 cxd4

This is a good move, but Black has a sensible alternative here. After 5...dxe4 6.♙xe4 ♘f6 7.♙f3 ♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♙e3 ♖c7 10.♘d2 ♚d8 the position is about equal. Also good in this line is 7...cxd4 8.cxd4 ♙d6 9.♘bc3 0-0 10.0-0 h6. This is no typical isolated pawn position. White's bishop on f3 looks misplaced but actually controls the main diagonal and therefore his counterpart on c8 with ease. With the idea of ♘e7 Black looks OK though. This actually transposes to the remark on move 6.

A sample line after 5...♘f6 is: 6.♙g5 dxe4 7.♙xe4 ♙e7 8.♙xf6 ♙xf6 9.♙xc6+ bxc6 10.dxc5 0-0 11.♖xd8 ♗xd8 12.♘d2 ♙a6 13.♘g3 ♗ab8 when Black has some compensation for the pawn.

6.cxd4

This is better than 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 7.cxd4 dxe4 8.♙xe4 ♘f6 9.♙f3 ♙d6.

6...♘b4

Interesting play. In Bluvshstein-Barsov, Montreal 2002, there followed: 6...dxe4 7.♙xe4 ♘f6 8.♙f3 ♙d6 9.♘bc3 0-0 10.0-0 h6 11.♙e3 ♘e7. GM Barsov plays the position with good understanding, he is aiming to blockade the pawn. Chances were about equal after 12.♘e4 ♘xe4 13.♙xe4 ♙d7.

7.♙b5+

Black is fine after 7.e5 ♘xd3+ 8.♖xd3 ♙d7.

7...♙d7 8.♙xd7+ ♖xd7 9.e5

White has more space, but Black is comfortable enough as shown by GM Degraeve.

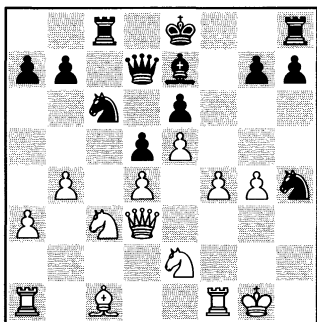
9...♘e7 10.♘bc3 ♘f5 11.a3 ♘c6 12.b4 ♙e7 13.0-0 ♗c8 14.♖d3 f6 15.g4

15.f4 0-0 Black is again very comfortable.

15...♘h4 16.f4 f5 17.h3

Positionally undesirable is 17.g5 h6 when Black is slightly better.

17...fxg4 18.hxg4



18...h5 19.gxh5

After the positionally desirable 19.f5 Black gets a winning attack with 19...hxg4 20.fxex6 ♖xe6 21.♟f4 ♖h6.

19...♟f5

Black has more than sufficient compensation for the pawn. Important squares are controlled by Black, and the white king is not as safe as White would like.

20.♞g2

20.b5 ♗cxd4 21.♟xd4 ♟xd4 22.♖xd4 ♟c5-+.

20...♞h4 21.♟b5 ♟ce7 22.a4 a6

23.♟d6+ ♟xd6 24.exd6 ♟f5 25.b5

♜xh5 26.bxa6 bxa6 27.♞a3 ♟f7

28.♜fc1 ♜xc1 29.♜xc1 ♟xd6

30.♞xd6 ♖xd6 31.♜c8 ♜h6 32.♜a8

♞e7 33.♜xa6 ♖b4 34.f5 ♖b8 35.♖g3

Correct was 35.fxe6+ ♟g8 36.♟g3.

35...♖b1 36.fxe6+ ♟g8 37.♜a8+ ♟h7

38.♟f2 ♞h4 0-1

□ Maxim Uritzky

■ Eduardas Rozentalis

Israel 1999

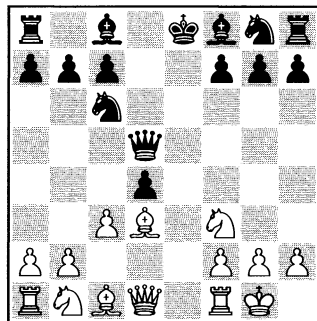
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♞d3 ♟c6

Rozentalis always comes up with interesting ideas in the French, and this is another one.

4.c3

Or 4.♟f3 ♟b4 – and it is impossible to imagine that Black can ever really be worse with the two bishops.

4...e5 5.♟f3 exd4 6.exd5 ♖xd5 7.0-0



It seems as if here White is developing very quickly.

7...♞d6 8.cxd4 ♟ge7 9.♟c3 ♖h5

10.♟e4

White is slightly better here.

10...0-0 11.♟xd6 cxd6 12.h3 ♟b4

13.♞b1

White keeps his bishop pair.

13...♖b5 14.♜e1 ♟bd5 15.♞d3 ♖b6

16.♞g5 ♟c6 17.♖e2 ♟db4 18.d5!

Trading the bishop pair for a considerable space advantage.

18...♟xd3 19.♖xd3 ♟b4 20.♖e4 f5

21.♖c4 ♞d7 22.♜e7 ♜f7 23.♜ae1

♜c8 24.♖b3 ♜cf8 25.♞d2!

Well-played! With simple means White has achieved a winning position.

25...♟a6 26.♖xb6 axb6 27.♟g5 ♟c7

28.♜xf7 ♜xf7 29.♟xf7 ♟xf7 30.♞f4

♟xd5 31.♞xd6 ♞c6 32.f3 ♟f6 33.♟f2

h5 34.h4 g6 35.a3 b5 36.♜e2 ♟f7

37.♟e1 ♟f6 38.♟d2 f4 39.♞e5+ ♟f7

40.♜e4 1-0

A nice game by Uritzky, showing a good level of class in defeating Rozentalis after getting an advantage in the opening.

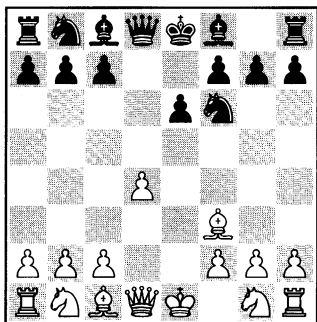
In the remainder of the games we will examine Black's main option to 'refute' 3.♙d3.

□ **Mark Bluvshstein**
 ■ **Heikki Westerinen**
 Gausdal 2003

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♙d3 dxe4

The most obvious solution to the opening problem. Black wins a tempo off of ♖f6 pushing the bishop back.

4.♙xe4 ♖f6 5.♙f3



This is the idea behind 3.♙d3, now the development of the black light squared bishop must be delayed. The white knight will settle nicely into the e2, c3 squares. White's idea is to simply develop.

5...♙e7

Black makes a very simple decision to keep developing.

6.♗e2 0-0 7.0-0 c5!

It is hard to come up with a better plan than c5, the only active way to play the position. Black's problem here is that the light-squared bishop will never get the chance to develop to a powerful square. White's light-squared bishop, on the other hand, has already found the long diagonal on which he is comfortable.

8.dxc5 ♙xc5 9.♖xd8 ♜xd8 10.♗bc3 ♗c6 11.♙f4 ♙d7

An effort to connect the rooks and keeping the position solid. 11...e5 12.♙g5 (Black has weakened a few squares for the development of the light squared bishop) 12...♙f5 (Black is quite comfortable in this position) 13.♜ac1.

12.♜ad1 ♙e8 13.a3

White is dreaming about somehow advancing the queenside pawns with b4 and c4.

13...a6 14.♗e4 ♗xe4 15.♙xe4

Black's position looks very passive now.

15...♜ac8 16.b4 ♙a7 17.c4

The queenside majority is set in motion.

17...f6 18.♙e3± ♙xe3 19.fxe3 ♜xd1 20.♜xd1 ♙h5 21.♗f2 ♗f8 22.♜d7 ♗e5 23.♜xb7 ♜xc4 24.♗d4 ♙f7 25.h3 f5 26.♙b1 f4 27.exf4 ♜xd4 28.fxe5 ♜d2+ 29.♗e3

Setting off on an impressive journey.

29...♜xg2 30.♗d4 ♜d2+ 31.♗c5 ♙e8 32.♗b6 ♙h2 33.♜a7

The white king wins this game.

33...♙b5 34.a4 ♙xa4 35.♜xa6 ♙e8 36.♙e4 ♜xh3 37.b5 ♙xb5 38.♗xb5 ♜e3 39.♜a4 ♗e7 40.♗c5 ♜c3+ 41.♗d4 ♜h3 42.♜a7+ ♗f8 43.♙d3 1-0

□ **Mark Bluvshstein**
 ■ **Yaqoov Vaingorten**
 Montreal 2001

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♙d3 dxe4 4.♙xe4 ♗c6 5.♙f3 c5

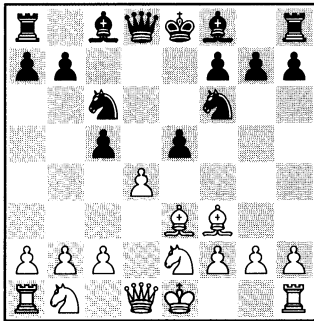
This is the main variation. The idea is to put pressure on White's d4 pawn, as well as play ♗c6 without leaving the c7 pawn behind.

6.♗e2 ♗c6 7.♙e3

I have never seen an opening where White develops pieces like this. White's idea is to simply castle next move. A very unorthodox

formation of white pieces at the board's line of scrimmage.

7...e5



This is a very critical line. The idea is to take advantage of the f3 bishop not having any squares. As well as hoping to exchange queens and putting the white king on d1.

8. ♖xc6+ bxc6 9. c3

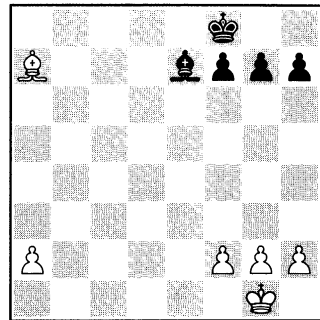
9.dxe5 ♜xd1+ 10. ♖xd1 ♘g4 and Black has satisfactory compensation which is shown by the fact that the king is stuck on d1, and at any time Black can take the e5 pawn back. Here Black holds the initiative. Even worse is 9.dxc5 ♜xd1+ 10. ♖xd1 ♘g4.

9...cxd4 10.cxd4 exd4 11. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 12. ♖xd4 ♖e7 13. ♘bc3 0-0 14.0-0

The result of this game does not really provide a clear look on the position. A realistic evaluation is equal. Black has the two bishops, but a weakness on c6. This asset cancels out the liability.

14...c5 15. ♖e3 ♖d7 16. ♘f4 ♖c6 17. ♘d3 ♜fc8 18. ♜fd1 ♘e4 19. ♘xe4 ♖xe4 20. ♜ac1 ♖d5 21. b3 a5 22. ♘xc5 ♖c6 23. ♘d7 ♖xd7 24. ♜xd7 ♜xc1+ 25. ♖xc1 ♖f8 26. ♖e3 a4 27. bxa4 ♜xa4 28. ♜a7 ♜a7 29. ♖xa7

White has been able to win the weak c-pawn, and transformed the game into a technically winning bishop ending.



29...♖e8 30. ♖d4 g6 31. a4 ♖b4 32. ♖f1 ♖d7 33. ♖e2 ♖c6 34. ♖d3 ♖d5 35. ♖b6 ♖c6 36. ♖e3 ♖d5 37. h3 h5 38. ♖b6 f5 39. f3 g5 40. a5 ♖c6 41. ♖c4 ♖d2 42. ♖d8 g4 43. a6 ♖c1 44. a7 ♖b7 45. ♖b6 gxf3 46. gxf3 f4 47. ♖d3 ♖a8 48. ♖e4 ♖d2 49. ♖d4 ♖b7 50. ♖f5 ♖e3 51. ♖f6 ♖xa7 52. ♖g5 ♖c6 53. ♖xh5 ♖d5 54. ♖g6 ♖d4 55. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 56. ♖f5 ♖e3 57. ♖g4 1-0

□ Mark Bluvshstein

■ Keith Arkell

Gausdal 2002

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3. ♖d3 dxe4 4. ♖xe4 ♘f6 5. ♖f3 c5 6. ♘e2 ♘c6 7. ♖e3 ♘d5

This move makes great sense, trying to get rid of the bishop on e3.

8. ♖xd5 ♜xd5

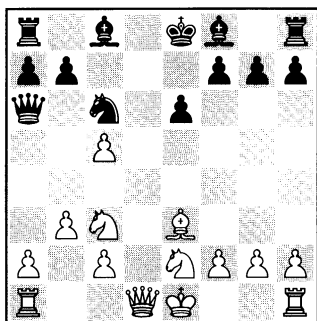
After 8...exd5 9.dxc5± White is simply a pawn up. The c5 pawn is doubled and quite weak. The d5 pawn though is also weak and isolated.

9. ♘bc3 ♜c4

Or 9...♜xg2 10. ♜g1 ♜xh2 11. ♖f4±. White's next move is ♘b5, and Black's pieces simply are not developed fast enough.

10. b3 ♜a6 11. dxc5

White is simply up a pawn. All counterplay was quickly deflected.



11...♙e7 12.♖d3 ♘b4 13.♗e4 ♚a3
 14.0-0 f5 15.♗c4 ♝xc2 16.♞b5 ♞xe3
 17.fxex3 ♗a5 18.b4 ♗d8 19.♞ad1
 ♙d7 20.♞d6+ ♙xd6 21.♞xd6 ♗e7
 22.♞fd1 ♞d8 23.b5 ♗g5 24.c6 ♗xe3+
 25.♞h1 bxc6 26.bxc6 0-0 27.♞xd7
 ♞c8 28.♗d4 ♗g5 29.♗e5 ♞xc6
 30.♞d4 ♞c1 31.♞xe6 ♞xd1+ 32.♞xd1
 ♗f6 33.♗d5 1-0

□ Mark Bluvshstein
 ■ Hoang Thanh Trang
 Budapest 2003

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♙d3 dxe4 4.♙xe4
 ♞f6 5.♙f3 c5 6.♞e2 ♞c6 7.♙e3 cxd4

Here 7...♗b6 – trying to go after the ‘poisoned’ pawn – is quite risky. After 8.♞bc3 ♗xb2 9.dxc5 all of White’s pieces are developed, while Black’s pieces are far behind. Equally bad is 8...cxd4 9.♞xd4 ♙c5 10.♙xc6+ bxc6 11.0-0±. White is simply much better in this position, the threat of ♞a4 is coming. Black’s pieces are badly misplaced.

8.♞xd4 ♞e5

The idea is simple and obvious: to get rid of White’s bishop, or to at least kick it off the long diagonal.

The alternative was 8...♞xd4 9.♗xd4, when there are two options:

– 9...♗xd4 10.♙xd4±. This transition to a simpler position helps White. There is no evident way of getting the light-squared bishop on c8 out. After White plays ♞c3 and long castle it is clear that White has an edge.

– 9...♗a5+ 10.♞c3 e5 11.♗c4 ♙e6 12.♙c6+! ♞d7 13.♙d5 ♙xd5 14.♗xd5 ♗xd5 15.♞xd5 ♞c8 16.0-0-0. And White is slightly more comfortable in this ending and won in Bluvshstein-Gorlin, Chicago 2002.

9.0-0

White’s plan is to fight for an advantage with his edge in development.

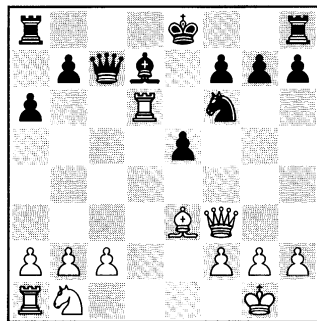
9...♞xf3+ 10.♗xf3 e5

After 10...♙e7 11.♞d1± White’s pieces are very active.

11.♞b5 a6 12.♞d1 ♙d7 13.♞d6+ ♙xd6 14.♞xd6

White is already feeling very comfortable with the position.

14...♗c7



15.♞xf6 gxf6 16.♗xf6± ♞g8 17.♙g5 ♙c6 18.♞c3

Black is completely dominated.

18...h6 19.♗xh6 b5 20.♞d1 ♞b8 21.♗f6 ♞f8 22.♙h6+ ♞e8 23.♞d5 ♞xg2+ 24.♞f1

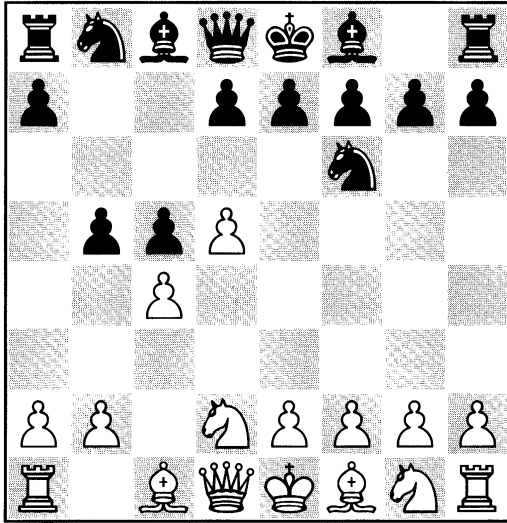
This is a bit sharper than necessary, but is a nice way to finish a sharp game.

24...♙xd5 25.♞xd5 ♗c4+ 26.♞d3 ♗e4 27.♗h8+ ♞e7 28.♗xb8 ♞g6 29.♙g5+ 1-0

CHAPTER 9

Alexander Beliavsky & Adrian Mikhalchishin

Volga Gambit with 4.♘d2

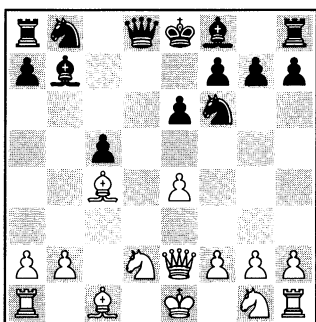


A modest move

In principle, the Volga gambit can be combated in two ways: (A) accept all the sacrifices; (B) avoid falling in with the opponent's wishes and pay no attention to his tactical trickery. For many years I (Alexander Beliavsky) have followed the first strategy, but in recent times I have decided to switch to strategy B. I very much like it, although as yet it has produced no tangible results.

In recent times the set-up with the modest 4.♘d2 has begun to occur very often in my games. The move 4.♘d2 against the Volga Gambit is a very cunning and complicated (for both sides) weapon. Black has four fundamentally different responses:

- 4...b4, avoiding a clash in the centre. However, to me this appears to favour White – he has very simple and concrete play.
- 4...♖a5 is an exclusively tactical move. It is not in the spirit of the position. Catastrophes are possible, as in the game Beliavsky-Bukal.
- 4...g6!? is an interesting continuation, aiming for free development and subsequent play in the centre, as in the game Beliavsky-Martinez. This is not at all a bad plan.
- 4...bxc4 5.e4 e6 6.dxe6 dxe6 7.♙xc4 ♗b7 8.♚e2. In my opinion, this is the critical position of the entire system, and it is on its evaluation that the fate of the variation depends (see the diagram on the next page).



In Beliavsky-Sermek, Black chose the plan of fighting for the e5 square – 8...♖bd7, 9...♜c7 and 10...♗d6, which led to very sharp play. In this variation White needs to seek an improvement.

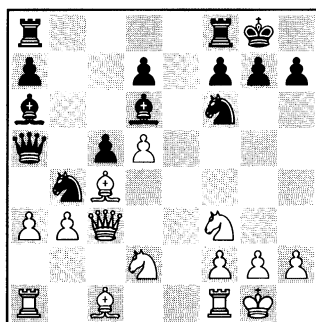
The second plan, involving a fight for the d4 square, was chosen by Fogarasi, Hungary 2001. Here White's chances are nevertheless somewhat better.

We will investigate the positions arising after 4.♘d2 bxc4 5.e4 on the basis of three of my games. Here are some 'stage directions' considering Black's alternatives:

● **4...b4 5.e4** And White continues naturally with ♗d3, ♘gf3 and 0-0. Sometimes adding f4 for even more punch in the centre.

● **4...g6 5.e4 d6 6.cxb5 a6 7.a4?!** This is not the best move. Simply 7.♘gf3 is correct. **7...♗g7 8.♘gf3 0-0 9.♖a3 e6 10.dxe6 ♗xe6 11.♗e2 axb5 12.♗xb5 ♜c7 13.0-0 ♘c6 14.♖e1 d5! 15.exd5 ♘xd5 16.♘e4 ♘cb4 17.♜e2 ♗f5!** with an unclear game in Beliavsky-Martinez, Las Vegas 2000.

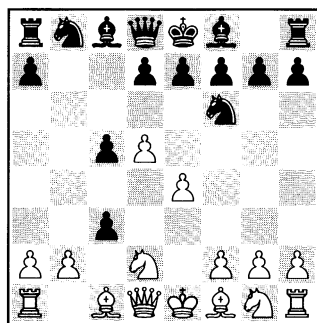
● **4...♜a5 5.♜c2 bxc4 6.e4 e6 7.♗xc4 ♘a6 8.♘f3 ♘b4 9.♜c3 exd5 10.exd5 ♗d6?** This is a blunder. Black had to play 10...♜c7! **11.0-0 0-0 12.a3 ♗a6 13.b3!**



And Black resigned for he is losing a piece, Beliavsky-Bukal, Nova Gorica 1999.

□ Alexander Beliavsky
 ■ Tibor Fogarasi
 Hungary tt 1998/99

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♘d2 bxc4 5.e4 c3



To weaken White's pawn structure. Another common move is 5...d6, when White continues 6.♗xc4 g6 7.b3 ♗g7 8.♗b2 0-0 9.♘gf3. **6.bxc3 d6 7.c4 g6 8.♗b2 ♗g7 9.♗d3** The main attraction of the whole 4.♘d2 line is that White has so many natural moves at his disposal.

9...0-0 10.♖b1
 It is also possible to play 10.♜c2. However,

after 10...e5 White should play 11.♗e2 ♖h5 12.0-0± as in the main game, rather than 11.dxe6 ♙xe6 12.♗e2 ♘c6 13.a3 ♚b8 14.♙c3 ♘g4 15.♙xg7 ♗xg7 16.0-0 ♚f6 17.♚a2 g5!±, Grachev-Poluliakhov, Krasnodar 2002.

10...e5 11.♗e2 ♖h5 12.0-0 ♘d7

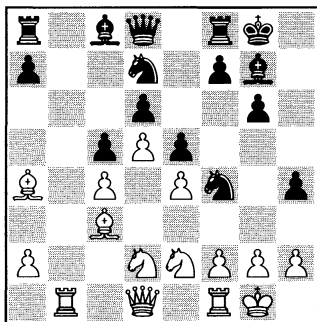
Alternatively, Black could play 12...♙h6!? intending 13...♘f4.

13.♙c3

And here 13.g3!? to prevent the knight from coming to f4 was entirely possible.

13...♘f4 14.♙c2 h5 15.♙a4 h4

Now it was definitely time for 15...♙h6.



16.♚b3

White could also enter the following forced line: 16.♘f4 exf4 17.♙xg7 ♗xg7 18.♙c6 ♚b8 19.♚f3 ♚f6 20.♚a3±.

16...h3 17.g3 ♘h5

Or 17...♗xe2+ 18.♚xe2 ♘b6 19.♙c6 ♚b8 20.♚fb1 with a slight plus for White.

18.f4!? exf4 19.♙xg7 ♗xg7 20.gxf4

White is not forced to recapture on f4. He is also slightly better after 20.♙xd7!? ♙xd7 21.♚a1+ ♗g8 22.♘xf4 ♘xf4 23.♚xf4.

20...♚h4 21.♗h1 ♚b8 22.♚a1+ ♗g8

23.♘f3 ♚e7 24.♚xb8 ♘xb8 25.e5

♙f5! 26.♚c3 ♘d7 27.♘g3

Perhaps 27.♚e1!?

27...♘g3+ 28.hxg3 dxe5

And here Black could keep the tension with 28...♚b8!?

29.fxe5 ♙e4 30.♙xd7 ♚xd7 31.♗h2 ♚g4 32.♘g1! ♙f5 33.♚f4 ♚d1 34.♚f3?!

Missing the last chance for some advantage with 34.♚b2! ♚e8 35.♘f3.

34...♚e1! 35.♚e2 ♚xe2+ 36.♘xe2 ♚e8 37.g4!

Now a drawn rook ending is reached.

37...♚xe5 38.gxf5 ♚xe2+ 39.♗xh3

gxf5 40.♚xf5 ♚xa2 41.d6 ♚d2

42.♚xc5 ♚xd6 43.♚a5 a6 44.♗g3 ♚d4

Draw.

□ Alexander Beliavsky

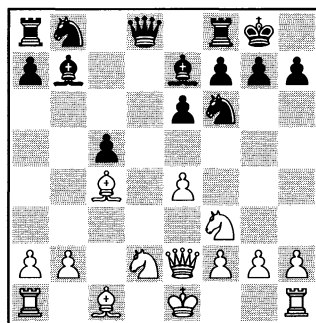
■ Tibor Fogarasi

Hungary tt 2001

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♘d2 bxc4 5.e4 e6 6.dxe6 dxe6 7.♙xc4 ♙b7

As mentioned above, I consider this to be the critical continuation.

8.♚e2 ♙e7!? 9.♘g3 0-0



10.0-0

There is something to be said for delaying castling. After 10.b3!? ♘c6 11.♙b2 ♘d4 12.♘d4 cxd4 13.0-0 White has kept a slight opening edge.

10...♘c6 11.♘b3

Trickier is 11.♚d1!?, hoping for 11...♘d4? 12.♘d4 cxd4 13.e5! and White is better.

11...a5!?

But not 11...♖c7 12.e5 ♘d7 13.♙f4 when White's advantage is not to be disputed.

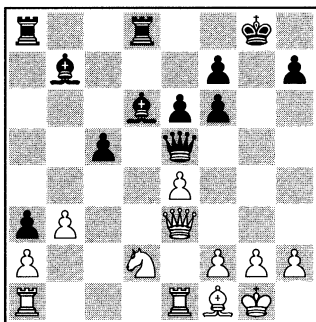
12.♙g5 a4 13.♙xf6

Making use of the fact that the b3-knight is still attacking c5. Not 13.♞fd1 ♖c7 14.♘bd2 ♘g4 and Black has grabbed the initiative.

13...gxf6 14.♘bd2 a3 15.b3

The game is unclear after 15.♘b3 axb2 16.♖xb2 ♖c7.

15...♗d4 16.♘xd4 ♖xd4 17.♞fe1 ♖e5 18.♖e3 ♞fd8 19.♙f1 ♙d6



20.♘f3?

Stronger was 20.g3!? planning 21.♘c4 with a nice edge.

20...♖f4 21.g3 ♖xe3 22.♞xe3 ♙f8 23.♞ae1 ♙h6 24.♞c3 ♙d2!

Correctly exchanging the bishop pair for a rook on the second rank. The advantage has clearly passed to Black. White must defend accurately to keep the draw.

25.♘xd2 ♞xd2 26.♞e2 ♞xe2 27.♙xe2 ♙xe4 28.♙f3!

But not 28.♞xc5 ♙b1 29.♞c1 ♙xa2 30.♙c4 ♞b8 with a clear endgame plus.

28...♙xf3 29.♞xf3 ♞d8

Bad was 29...f5? 30.♞c3 ♙a5 31.♙f1 intending ♙e2-d3-c4, b3-b4±.

30.♞c3 ♞d2 31.♞xc5 ♞xa2 32.♞a5 ♙g7 33.b4 ♞b2 34.♞xa3 ♞xb4 35.♙g2 f5 36.♞a2 e5 37.♞a5 f6 38.♞a8 h5 39.♞a7+ ♙g6 40.♞a8 f4

41.♞g8+ ♙f5 42.♞h8 ♙g6 43.♞g8+ ♙h7 44.♞a8 ♙g6

Draw.

□ Alexander Beliavsky

■ Drazen Sermek

Bled tt 2000

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.♘d2 bxc4 5.e4 e6 6.dxe6 dxe6

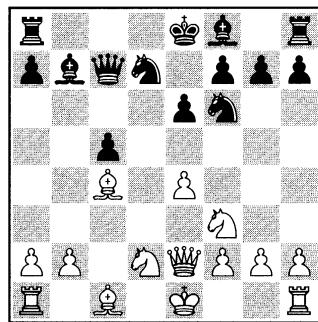
Taking back with the f-pawn is not a good idea. White is better after 6...fxe6 7.e5 ♘d5 8.♘xc4 ♖h4 9.♘f3 ♖e4+ 10.♖e2 ♖xe2+ 11.♙xe2 ♙a6 12.♘a5 ♙e7 13.♙d2.

7.♙xc4 ♙b7 8.♖e2

Possibly White can even play differently here. How about 8.f3!? ♘c6 9.♘e2 ♙d6 10.0-0 ♙e5 11.♘b3±?

8...♘bd7 9.♘g3 ♖c7

Black fights for control over the e5-square with all his might.



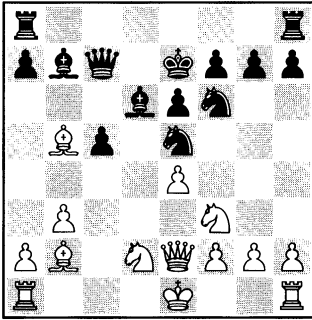
10.b3

And White does just the same! Castling is no better, as Black has 10.0-0 ♙d6 11.♞e1 ♘e5 12.♙b5+ ♙e7 13.♘xe5 ♙xe5 14.♘f3 ♞hd8!?. The king on e7 causes Black no headaches.

10...♙d6 11.♙b2 ♘e5!?

Here 11...♙f4!? 12.0-0 ♞d8 13.♞fd1 0-0 is about equal.

12.♙b5+ ♙e7

**13.0-0?!**

It was still too early for castling. Still, after 13.♞d1 ♟xf3+ 14.♞xf3 ♞a5 15.♟a4 c4 Black has counterplay too.

13...♟xf3+ 14.♟xf3 ♞xe4 15.♞ac1

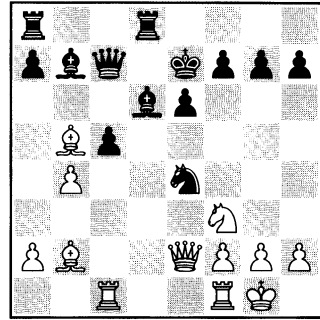
White plays for compensation. Clearly, 15.♟xg7 ♞hg8 16.♞b2 f6 17.♟h6 ♞g6 18.♟e3 ♞ag8 with an attack, was not to his liking.

15...♞hd8

Also 15...♟f6!? to put the onus on White was possible.

16.b4!?

Again it is dangerous to play 16.♟xg7!?, as 16...♞g8 17.♞b2 f6 18.♟h6 ♟f4!? gives Black an attack. However, in the game Black also grabs the initiative.

**16...♟xh2+! 17.♟xh2**

No better is 17.♟h1 ♟f4.

17...♞d2 18.♞xc5 ♞b6 19.♞c4 ♞xb2 20.a4 a6!

Accepting the sacrifice with 20...♟xc5 gives White decent compensation after 21.bxc5 ♞c7 22.♞h4+ ♟f8 23.c6.

21.♞c7+ ♟f8 22.♞xb7 ♞xb7 23.♟c6 ♞c8 24.♟xe4 ♞xc4 25.♟xb7 ♞cxb4 26.♟xa6 ♞xa4 27.♟d3 ♞d4

Correct was 27...h6 28.♟f3 g5 and Black has all the chances in this ending.

28.♟a6 ♞a4 29.♟d3 e5? 30.♞e1 ♞d4

Black allows White to escape to an elementary draw.

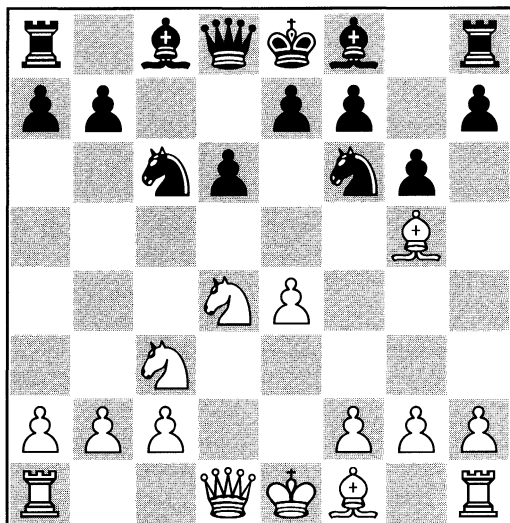
31.♟xh7! g6 32.♟f3 ♞f4 33.♟xg6 fxg6 34.♞xe5

Draw.

CHAPTER 10

Oleg Chernikov

Provocation in the Rauzer: 6...g6



Combining the Rauzer and the Dragon

**1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4
♗f6 5.♗c3 d6 6.♕g5 g6**

A surprising answer to Rauzer's 6.♕g5, since the bishop move is thought to prevent Black's fianchetto. The idea of 6...g6 is to forcibly transpose into the Dragon Variation. Black as though ignores the move ♕f6, subsequently pinning his hopes on his f8 bishop. The source game Gromek-Bondarevsky, Lodz 1955, is widely known: 7.♕xf6 exf6 8.♕e2 ♕g7 9.♗db5 0-0 10.♖xd6 f5 11.0-0 fxe4 12.♖xd8 ♖xd8 13.♗xe4 ♕xb2.

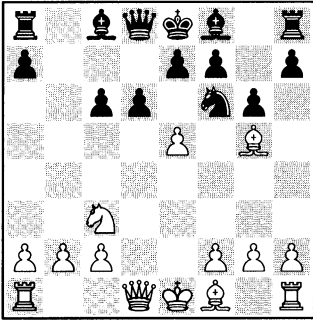
Later, the first edition of the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings cited the games

Kärner-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1965: 7.♕xf6 exf6 8.♖d2 ♕g7 9.♗db5 0-0 10.♗xd6 f5 11.0-0 ♖a5, and Suetin-Gurgenidze, Tbilisi 1969: 7.♕xf6 exf6 8.♕b5 ♕d7 9.0-0 ♕g7 10.♖d2 0-0 11.♗b3 f5!.

Over the 50 years(!) since the time of the first known game, not so many games have been played with this variation. The aim of this article is to show in more detail the history of the development of the variation and to demonstrate the most relevant games played with this variation. So, in the position after 6...♕g5 g6, the most critical continuation is

7.♕xf6 exf6

But sometimes White avoids this in favour of the sharp **7.♖xc6 bxc6 8.e5**.



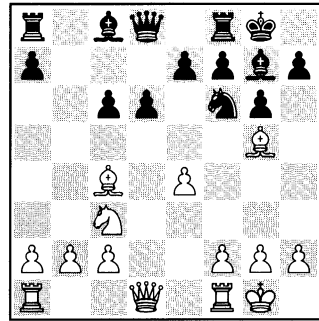
Several games on this theme have been played largely by the author of this article, in which Black successfully defends and even launches a counterattack: **8...dxe5 9.♖f3**:

● 9...♗g7 10.♖xc6+ ♗d7 11.♖c5 0-0 12.♗e2 ♖b8 13.0-0 ♖xb2 14.♗f3 ♜ac8 15.♖xe7 ♜fe8 16.♖d6 ♜e6 17.♖d1 ♖xc3 18.♗xf6 ♗b5 19.♗xg7 ♗xf1 20.♗h6 ♗b5 and Black converted his material advantage, Kokorin-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1962. The following reply is also interesting:

● 9...♗d7 10.0-0-0 ♗g7 11.♗xf6 exf6 12.♗e4 ♖e7 13.♗d6+ ♗f8 14.♗c4 ♗h6+ 15.♗b1 ♗e6= 16.♖xc6 ♜d8 17.♗xe6?. This is a blunder because of 17...♖xe6 18.♜he1 ♗e7! winning a piece and the game, Bastrikov-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1963.

The exchange of queens after **8...dxe5 9.♖xd8+** (instead of 9.♖f3) also does not promise White any advantage: 9...♗xd8 10.0-0-0+ ♗e8 11.♗c4 ♗g7 12.♜he1 ♗d7 13.♗a4 f5!? (14.f4 was threatened) 14.f3 ♜f8 15.♜d3 ♗b6 16.♗xb6 axb6 17.♜ed1 ♗a6 18.♜a3 b5 and Black retained his extra pawn, Sporyagin-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1963.

Quieter positions arise when instead of 8.e5 White plays the more restrained **8...♗c4 ♗g7 9.0-0 0-0**:



● 10.♖d2 ♜e8 11.♗b3 ♖a5 12.♜ad1 ♗d7 13.f4 ♗c5 14.♖e3 ♖b6 15.♜fe1 ♗xb3 16.axb3 ♗e6 17.♖xb6 axb6=, Fri-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1963.

● 10.♗b3 ♗e6!? 11.♗xe6 fxe6 12.e5!? dxe5 13.♖e2 ♗d5 14.♗d2 ♖b6 15.♗e4 ♖xb2 16.♜fb1 ♖xc2 17.♜c1 ♗f4 18.♖e3 ♖b2 19.g3 ♗d5 and White's slight initiative hardly compensates for the three (!) missing pawns, Matyukov-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1963.

Let us turn to the main reply, the variation 6...g6 7.♗xf6 exf6.

In this position White has a number of continuations, which we will examine in the following order:

- A) 8.♗e2
- B) 8.♗c4
- C) 8.♗b5
- D) 8.♖d2
- E) 8.♗b3

Variation A

8.♗e2

Along with 8.♗c4 and 8.♗b5, this is the most frequently occurring continuation.

8...♗g7

Sacrificing the d6 pawn, is the main variation, but since 8.♗e2 is not the most active continuation, 8...a6 is possible. One game

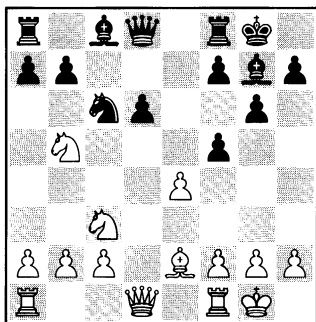
went 9. ♖d2 ♙g7 10. ♞d1 0-0 11. ♜xc6 bxc6 12. 0-0 ♜b8 13. ♜xd6 ♜xd6 14. ♞xd6 ♞xb2 15. ♞xc6 f5 16. exf5 ♞xc2 17. f6 ♙xf6 18. ♞xf6 ♞xc3 19. ♙xa6 ♙e6 20. a4 ♞a8 21. ♙b5 ♙c4 ½-½, Stoica-Tischbierek, Romania 1984.

- A1) 9.0-0
A2) 9. ♜db5

Variation A1

9.0-0 0-0 10. ♜db5 f5

This is a recurring theme in all lines. Black needs to open the main diagonal for his 'Dragon-bishop'.



11. ♜xd6

Relatively the best move, although it must be clear that the endgame is advantageous for Black. Even worse are:

– 11. exf5 ♙xf5 12. ♜xd6 ♙xc2 13. ♜xc2 ♜xd6 14. ♜a4 ♜d4 15. ♞fe1 ♜b6 16. ♞ab1 ♞ac8 17. ♙f1 ♞fd8 18. h3 ♜f5 19. ♜b5 ♜xb5 20. ♜xb5 ♞c2, Ivlev-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1964.

– 11. ♙f3 ♙e5 12. exf5 ♙xf5 13. ♜d2 a6 14. ♜a3 ♞c8 15. ♜c4 ♜d4 16. ♜xe5 dxe5 ♞ 17. ♞fd1? ♙xc2 18. ♙xb7 ♙xd1, Korkishko-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1960.

11...a6 12. ♜xd8 ♞xd8 13. ♜c7 ♞a7 14. ♜7d5 fxe4 15. ♞ad1 ♜d4 16. f3!?
b5 17. ♙f2 f5 18. a4

Preferable was 18. fxe4 with an equal position.

18... ♞ad7 19. axb5 axb5 20. f4 ♙b7 21. ♜e3 ♙c6

Black is slightly better, Kurolap-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1960.

Variation A2

9. ♜db5

This looks more energetic than 9.0-0.

9...0-0

And now White has to decide how to take on d6:

● 10. ♜xd6 f5 11. exf5 (a later game went 11.0-0 ♜d4 12. ♜xc8 ♞xc8 13. ♙d3 f4? – too optimistic; easy play was given by 13...b5 with compensation for the pawn – 14. ♜d5 ♙e5 15. c3 ♜e6 16. ♞e1 ♙g7 17. ♜e2 h5 18. ♞ad1 ♜h4 19. f3 ♜g5 20. ♜f2, Vitinik-Chernikov, Vladivostok 1990) 11... ♜a5 12.0-0 ♞d8! (Black is close to equality after 12... ♙xf5 13. ♜xf5 ♜xf5) 13. fxc6 hxc6 14. ♜ce4 ♙e5 15. ♙c4 ♙xd6 16. ♜xd6 ♜c5 17. ♙xf7+ ♙g7 18. ♙xg6! ♞xd6 19. ♙d3 ♜e5 20. ♜e2 ♙g4 21. ♜e4 ♞h8, Zhilina-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1961.

● 10. ♜xd6 f5 11. ♜xd8 ♞xd8 12.0-0 a6?! 13. ♜c7 ♞a7 14. ♞ad1 ♞xd1 15. ♞xd1 b5 16. ♜e8! b4 17. ♜a4 ♜d4 18. ♙c4 ♞d7 19. ♙f1 ♙e5 20. ♜b6 ♞e7 21. ♜xc8 ♞xe8 22. ♜d6 ♙xd6 23. ♞xd4 ♞xe4 24. ♙xf7+ ♙xf7 25. ♞xd6 ♞c4 26. ♞d2, Tappyrov-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1972. Not wasting a tempo with 12...fxe4! comes into consideration; as the above game shows, the knight at e8 stood well.

Variation B

8. ♙c4

Along with 8. ♙b5, one of the most active continuations.

8... ♙g7

The main move. Others have also occurred:

– 8... ♜e5?! 9. ♙b3 a6 10. f4 ♜d7 11. ♜f3 ♙g7 12.0-0 0-0 13. ♙b1 ♜c5 14. f5 ♙d7 15. h4 ♜xb3 16. cxb3 ♞e8 17. h5 g5+, I. Gurevich-Burnett, USA 1986, and

– 8...♙e7? 9.♚d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♖e8 11.♗b1
a6 12.h4 h5 13.f3 ♘g7 14.♙dgl ♘xd4
15.♚xd4 ♖h8 16.g4 ♙e6 17.♘d5±, Roiz
Baztan-Igea, Oviedo rapid 1991.

After 8...♙g7 White must decide whether to
castle kingside or queenside:

- B1) 9.0-0
B2) 9.♘db5

Variation B1

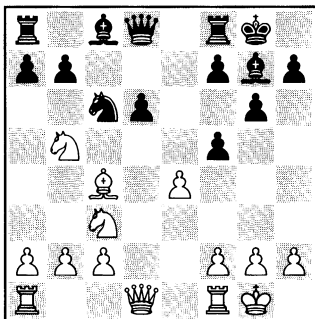
9.0-0 0-0 10.♘db5

The most thematic continuation. White was
not very successful with the alternatives:

● 10.♙d5 ♚b6 11.♘db5 f5 12.♖b1 ♙e5
13.♘a3 f4 14.♘c4 ♚c5 15.b4 ♚d4=,
Mudrak-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1965.

● 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♚f3 ♚b6 12.♙b3 f5
13.♙ad1 ♙e5 14.♙fel a5 15.a4 ♚c7 16.h4?
f4 17.♘e2 ♚e7 18.g3 fxc3 19.fxc3 h5±,
Gedevanishvili-Chernikov, Soviet Union
1973.

● 10.♘de2 f5 11.exf5 ♙xf5 12.♘g3 (pas-
sive is 12.♚d2 ♖c8 13.♙ad1 ♘e5 14.♙d5
♘c4 15.♙xc4 ♖xc4 16.♚xd6 ♚xd6 17.♙xd6
♙xc2 18.♙d7 ♖b4 19.b3 ♙f5± Cesnaukas-
Chernikov, Soviet Union 1973) 12...♙c8
13.♙b3 ♖b8 14.f4 ♘d4 15.♘d5 b5 16.c3
♘xb3 17.axb3 a5 18.f5 ♖e8 19.♚d3 ♖e5
20.♗h1 ♙b7 21.♘e3 ♚g5 22.♘c2 ♖be8
23.fxc6 hxc6±, Sleich-Chernikov, Decin 1997.
10...f5



In practice Black was able to keep the bal-
ance:

● 11.exf5 ♙xf5 12.♘d6 ♙xc2! (the alter-
native is 12...♙xc3 13.♘xf5 ♙xb2 14.♖b1
♙f6 15.♘d6 ♘e5 16.♖xb7 ♙e7 17.♘xf7
♘xf7 18.♙d7 ♚c8 19.♙d5 ♚c5 20.♙xa8
♖xa8 21.♖e1± Tukmakov-Gurgenidze,
Kiev 1969) 13.♘b7 ♚xd1 14.♘d1 ♖ab8
15.♘d6 ♘a5 16.♘e3 ♘c4 17.♘dxc4 ♙d3
18.♙fd1 ♙xc4 19.♘xc4 ♖fc8 20.♙ac1
♙xb2=, Volkovich-Chernikov, 1961.

● 11.♘d6 ♘d4 12.♘xc8 ♖xc8 13.♙b3
(the alternative is 13.♙d5 f4? – a mistake;
13...b5! 14.a3 a5 is correct; the standard mi-
nority attack leads to equality – 14.♘e2 ♘e6
15.c3 f3?! 16.gxf3 ♘g5 17.♚d3 ♘h3+
18.♗g2 ♚h4 19.f4 ♚g4+ 20.♗h1 ♘xf4
21.♘xf4 ♚xf4 22.♙ad1±, Kopylov-
Chernikov, 1961) 13...♘b3 14.axb3 ♙xc3
15.bxc3 fxe4= 16.♚e1 ♚b6 17.c4 ♖fe8
18.♚e3 ♚xe3 19.fxe3 a6 20.♙fd1 b5=,
Vitolins-Chernikov, 1975.

Variation B2

9.♘db5 0-0 10.♚xd6 f5 11.0-0-0

There are now two queen moves to consider:

- B21) 11...♚a5
B22) 11...♚g5+

Variation B21

11...♚a5 12.♚c7 a6 13.♚xa5 ♘xa5 14.♘d6!

The strongest; the more usual 14.♘c7 does
not give any advantage after 14...♖a7
15.♙b3 ♙xc3 16.bxc3 fxe4 17.♖he1 b5
18.♘d5 f5 19.♘b6+ ♗g7 20.♙d6 ♖c7
21.♗b2 ♙b7 22.g3 ♖f6 23.♙ed1 ♙xd6
24.♙xd6 ♙c6 25.c4 bxc4 26.♘xc4 ♘b7
½-½, Kholmov-Chernikov, 1982.

14...♙xc4 15.♘xc4 ♙xc3?!

It is possibly better to retain both bishops:
15...♙e6 16.♘b6 ♙ad8 with quite good
compensation for the pawn.

16.bxc3 fxe4 17.♘b6 ♖b8 18.♞d6
 ♜e8 19.c4! ♔g7? 19...e3!?±. 20.♞e1
 ♙f5 21.♗b2 ♞bd8 22.c5 ♖b8
 22...♞xd6∞. 23.♔c3 ♜e7 24.♞e3±

Petrushin-Chernikov, Soviet Union 1973.

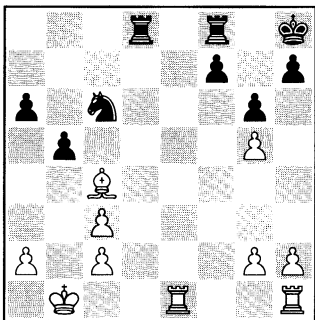
Instead of 11...♞a5, more complicated play results from:

Variation B22

11...♞g5+

In the books this move is given a poor assessment. 11...♞g5+? 12.f4 ♞xg2 13.e5±, but after 12...♞h6! (instead of 12...♞xg2) all is not yet clear. Several games played at quite high level provide confirmation of this.

12.f4 ♞h6 13.♗b1 fxe4 14.♘xe4 ♙g4
 15.♞de1 a6 16.♘bc3 ♞ad8 17.♘f6+
 ♔h8 18.♘g4 ♞h4 19.♞c5 ♞xg4
 20.♞g5 ♞xg5 21.fxg5 ♙xc3 22.bxc3
 b5



I had no problems in two of my games:
 – 23.♙d3 ♞d5 24.♙e4 ♞c5 25.♙xc6 ♞xc6
 26.♞e3 ♞c4 27.g3 h6!= 28.gxh6 ♔h7
 29.♞f1 f5 30.♞e6 ♞fc8 with equality, Mokry-Chernikov, Rimavska Sobota 1990.

– the later game Klovans-Chernikov, Grieskirchen 1998, went 23.♙b3 ♞d2 24.g3 ♔g7
 25.h4 ♘a5 26.♞hf1 ♘c4 27.♙xc4 bxc4=
 28.♞e4 ♙g2 29.♞xc4 ♞xg3 30.♞a4 ♞xc3
 31.♞xa6 ♞c4 32.♞h1 ♞e8 33.♞a3 ♞e2
 34.♞f1 ♞xc2, ½-½.

The ‘improvement’ employed by the author

in a comparatively recent game, 15...♞ad8 (instead of 15...a6) proved not the best continuation: 16.♘f6+ ♔h8 17.♘xg4 ♞h4 18.♞c7! ♞xg4 19.♘d6 ♞d7 20.♞xd7 ♞xd7 21.♘e4 ♘d4 22.c3 ♞c8? 23.♙xf7 ♞f8 24.♙c4 b5 25.♙d3 ♘f3 26.♞d1+., Goloschapov-Chernikov, Moscow 2002.

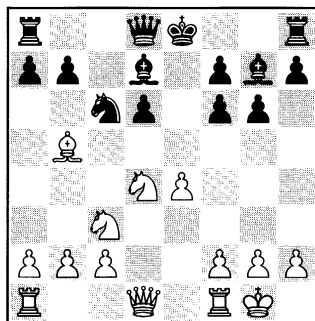
Variation C

8.♙b5 ♙d7

In this position 9.0-0 often occurs with numerous branches, as well as the knight retreats 9.♘de2 and 9.♘b3. We will examine the variations in order.

Variation C1

9.0-0 ♙g7



10.♘de2

Here various other moves have been played:

● 10.♘d5 0-0 11.c3 ♞e8 12.♙d3 ½-½. After 12...♞e6 the game is completely equal, Petrushin-Chernikov, 1973.

● 10.♙xc6 bxc6 11.♘de2 ♙e6 12.♞d3 ♞c7 13.♞ad1 ♞d8 14.♘d4 0-0 15.♞a6 ♞c8 16.♘ce2 ♞fe8 17.c4 ♞b6 18.♞xb6 axb6 19.♘xe6 ♞xe6 20.♘c3 ♞a8=, Ermakov-Chernikov, 1965.

● 10.f4 ♞b6 11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.♘a4 ♞a5 13.♘c3 f5 14.♔h1 0-0 15.exf5 ♞b4 16.♘b3 ♙xf5 17.a3 ♞b6 18.♞d2 ♞ab8 19.♞ad1 ♞fd8, Ukhvanov-Chernikov, 1960.

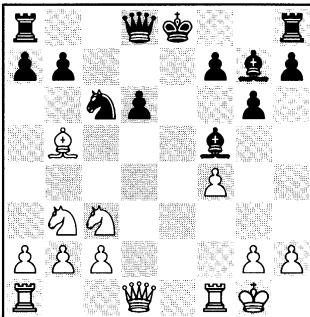
● 10.♟xc6 bxc6 (10...♟xc6 is also not bad) 11.♟a4 ♟f8 (the natural 11...♟c7 is inferior: 12.♟d2 ♞d8 13.♞ad1 ♟e6 14.♟d5! ♟b7 15.♟b4±) 12.♟d2 ♟a5 13.♞ad1 ♟e7 14.♟h6 ♟f8 15.♟d2 ♟e7= Belyaev-Chernikov, 1960.

● 10.♟d2 0-0 11.♟b3 (another plan is 11.♞ad1 f5 12.♟xc6 bxc6 13.exf5 d5 with counterplay, or 12.♟xc6 ♟xc6 13.♟xc6 bxc6 14.exf5 d5 15.fxg6 hxg6 with quite good play for Black) 11...f5 12.♟xd6 fxe4 13.♟c5 ♟c8 14.♟5xe4 ♟d4 15.♟xd8 ♞xd8 16.♟d3 ♟f5 17.f3 ♞ac8, ½-½ Suetin-Gurgenidze, Tbilisi 1969.

However, the main alternative to 10.♟de2 is **10.♟b3**. After **10...♟e6** White has tried:

11.♟d2 0-0 12.♞ad1 f5 13.♞fe1 (another game went 13.♟xc6 bxc6 14.♟d4 ♟b6 15.exf5 ♟c4 16.♞fe1 ♟xb2 17.♞b1 ♟a3 18.♟e4 ♞fe8 19.f6 d5 20.♟f5 ♟f8 21.♞e3 ♟xa2 22.♟c3 ♟a3 23.♞h3 d4∞ Novopashin-Chernikov, Dnepropetrovsk 1964) 13...♟e5 14.♟xc6 bxc6 15.f4 ♟b6+ 16.♟h1 ♟g7 17.♟xd6 ♞xd6 18.♟c5 ♟xb3 19.♟xb6 axb6 20.axb3 fxe4 21.♟xe4 ♟xb2=, Skotorenko-Chernikov, 1962.

A sharper continuation is **11.f4** (instead of 11.♟d2) 11...f5!? (of course, it is possible to allow the squeeze f4-f5 and then bring out the bishop via h6 to e3 and d4, but in this case White has a slight advantage) 12.exf5 ♟xf5 (White is slightly better after 12...gxf5)



13.g4! ♟e6 14.f5 ♟xb3! 15.axb3 ♟b6+ 16.♟h1 ♟xc3 17.bxc3 ♟xb5 18.♟xd6 (18.♞e1+ ♟d7!) 18...♟e7 19.♞fe1 0-0 20.♞xe7 ♞ad8∞.

In Palac-Chernikov, Rimavska Sobota 1990, 13.♞e1+ was played instead of 13.g4 and the players agreed a draw. White has nothing in particular after either 13...♟e6 14.f5 gxf5 15.♟d5 0-0 or 14.♟c4 0-0 15.♟xe6 fxe6 16.♞xe6 ♟xf4= 17.♞xd6? ♟d4+♞.

10...♟e6

Rather than 10...♟c8 11.♟d2 0-0 12.♞ad1 f5 13.exf5 ♟xf5 14.♟xc6 bxc6 15.♟d4 ♟g4 16.f3 ♟d7 17.♟b3 d5 18.♟a4 ♟c7 19.♟ac5± Van den Doel-Bakhtadze, 1993.

11.♟d2

In the variation 11.♟f4 (instead of 11.♟d2) 11...0-0 12.♟xe6 fxe6 13.♟c4 ♟e7 14.f4 f5 Black has at least equal chances.

11...0-0

And now:

● 12.♞ad1 f5 13.♟f4 ♟c8? 14.♞fe1 ♟d4 15.♟fd5 ♟a5 16.exf5 ♟xf5 17.♟d3 ♟g4? (17...♟xd3 18.♟xd3±) 18.♟g5! (threatening 19.♟xg4 and 19.♟f6+) 18...♟f5 19.♟f6+ ♟xf6 20.♟xf6 ♟e6 21.♟xf5 ♟xf5 22.♟xf5 gxf5 23.♟xd6±, Klovans-Chernikov, Weilburg 1998. The variation can be improved with 13...♟d4 (instead of 13...♟c8) 14.♟xe6 fxe6 15.♟c4 fxe4∞ or 15.♟d3 ♟f6=, when Black's centralised knight securely covers his weakened pawn chain.

● 12.♞fd1 f5 13.♟xd6 ♟b6 14.♟xc6 bxc6 15.♟f4 ♟xb2 16.♞ab1 ♟a3 17.♟d6 ♟xd6 18.♞xd6 fxe4 19.a4 ♟e5 20.♟xc6 ♞ac8 21.♞xc8 ♞xc8♞, Zhelmin-Chernikov, 1972.

● 12.♟a4 f5 13.exf5 ♟xf5 14.♞ad1 ♟a5 15.♟b3 ♟xb3 16.cxb3 h5 17.h3 h4 18.♟xd6 ♟c2 19.♟xd8 ♞axd8 20.♞d5 ♞xd5 21.♟xd5 ♟xb2♞, Astashin-Chernikov, 1974.

Let us turn to variations in which White immediately retreats his knight with 9.♟de2 or 9.♟b3, retaining the possibility of 0-0-0.

Variation C2

9.♘de2 ♖e6

A game of the Dragon expert Eduard Gufeld went 9...a6 10.♖a4 ♖e7?! – dubious, with all respect to the grandmaster – 11.♘d5 0-0 12.c3 f5 13.exf5 ♖xf5 14.0-0 ♖f6 15.♘g3 ♖c8 16.♘xf6+ ♗xf6 17.♘e4 ♗e5 18.♖xc6 bxc6 19.♘xd6 ♖e6 20.♖e1 ♗f4 21.c4 c5 22.♘e4 ♖xc4 23.♗c1 ♗xc1 24.♖excl±, Bronstein-Gufeld, Tbilisi 1969.

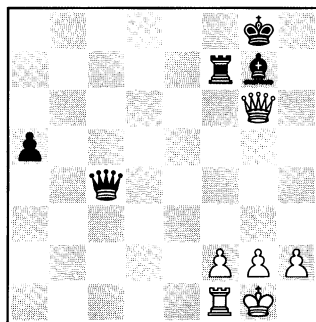
● **10.h4 ♖g7 11.h5 0-0 12.♘f4 ♗e7 13.hxg6 hxg6 14.♖cd5 ♖xd5 15.♗xd5 ♖fe8 16.f3 f5! ♖f1 ♗f6 18.♗b3 fxe4 19.♘d5 ♗d8 20.♖d1 a6 21.♖e2 ♘d4** and Black was slightly better in Astashin-Chernikov, 1973.

● **10.♗d2 ♖g7** Apart from this natural move, Black can also consider 10...a6 11.♖a4 ♖c8 12.0-0-0 ♖e7 or 12...b5, refraining from the development of his dark-square bishop; however, White has a slight advantage. **11.♘d4 ♖c8 12.♖d1 12.0-0-0** is better. **12...♗e7?!** Optimistic, of course; if White had played 12.0-0-0, this move would have been very risky. **13.0-0 ♘xd4 14.♗xd4 ♗b6 15.♗xb6 axb6 16.♖a4 ♖c5 17.♖fe1 f5 18.♘d5+ ♖xd5 19.exd5+ ♖e5=** Matanovic-Chernikov, Elista 2002.

The game examined below was played by two strong grandmasters, but with the rather slow manoeuvre ♘d4-e2-f4 White is not able to refute the variation.

● **10.♘f4 ♖g7 11.♗d3 0-0 12.♘xe6 fxe6 13.♖d1 f5 14.♖xc6 bxc6 15.♗xd6 ♗b6 16.0-0 ♗xb2 17.♘a4 ♗xa2 18.♘c5 fxe4? 18...♖fe8!. 19.♘xe6 ♖f6 20.♗xc6 ♖af8 21.c4? 21.♖d6. 21...e3! 22.♗d5 ♖f5 23.♗b7 ♖5f7 24.♗b1 ♗xc4 25.♘xf8 e2 26.♘xg6 exf1 ♗+ 27.♖xf1 hxg6 28.♗xg6 a5**

and Black's sole surviving pawn decided the outcome of the game, Nataf-Nisipeanu, German Bundesliga 2004/05.



Variation C3

9.♘b3 ♖e6 10.f4

The most critical continuation 10.0-0 a6 11.♖e2 ♖g7 12.f4 f5 13.exf5 ♖xf5 14.♖d3±, recommended in the Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings, is not obligatory for Black. 10...♖g7, instead of 10...a6, leads to variation C1, notes to move 10, where an advantage for White has not been demonstrated.

10...♖g7

Here 10...f5 is also not bad.

11.f5 gxf5 12.♘d4 0-0 13.♘xe6 fxe6 14.exf5 d5 15.0-0 ♘e7 16.♗h1 d4 17.♘e2 ♘xf5 18.♖xf5!? exf5 19.♘f4 ♗d6∞ Bergin-Chernikov, 1963.

Variation D

8.♗d2

A very rare continuation is 8.g3 ♖g7 9.♘db5 0-0 10.♗xd6 f5 11.♖g2 ♗a5 12.♗a3 ♗xa3 13.♘xa3 fxe4 ♖f4 14.0-0-0 ♖g4 15.♖d5 ♖xc3 16.bxc3 f5 17.h3 ♖h5 18.♖e1 ♖ae8 19.♘c4 ♖e7 20.♘e3 ♘e5!∞, Delektorsky-Chernikov, 1961.

Reckless is 8.h4 ♖g7 (or 8...h5=) 9.h5 0-0 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♖c4 f5? (much better was 11...♘xd4! 12.♗xd4 f5∞) 12.♘xf5! ♖xf5 13.exf5 ♗a5 14.fxg6 ♖xc3+ 15.♗f1 ♖f6 16.♖h5 ♘e5 17.♖xf7+ ♖xf7 18.gxf7+ ♗xf7 unclear, Belov-Chernikov, 1966.

8...♖g7

The main continuation. Instead 8...a6? has

been played, but is not rated highly: 9.0-0-0
 ♖e5 10.♗b1 h5 11.f4 ♙h6 12.h3 h4 13.♗d5
 ♗d7 14.♗b4 ♗c5 15.e5 fxe5 16.fxe5 0-0
 17.♗f6+ ♗g7 18.♗f3 ♗e7 19.♗xh4 ♗d8
 1-0, Tsheshkovsky-Polovodin, Moscow 1992.

9.♗db5

Or 9.0-0-0 0-0 and now:

● 10.♗b3 f5 11.h4!? a5 12.♙b5 ♗b6 13.a4
 fxe4 14.h5 ♙e6 15.hxg6 hxg6 16.♗xe4
 ♙xb3 17.♗f4 ♗fd8 18.cxb3 ♗e5±. As often
 happens in the Dragon Variation, the attack
 on the queenside proved effective, Genin-
 Chernikov, 1962.

● 10.♗xc6 bxc6 11.♗xd6 ♗b6 12.♗d4
 ♗xd4? (the exchange of queens is not oblig-
 atory – 12...♗b7, 12...♗b8 or 12...♗a5 all
 give prospects of an attack, and if Black
 wants to exchange queens, he should play
 12...f5! 13.♗xb6 axb6, when he has a fully
 equal game) 13.♗xd4± ♙e6 14.♙d3 c5
 15.♗a4 ♗fd8 16.f4 ♙h6 17.g3 ♗d6
 18.♙c4±, Mrdja-Berna, Rome 1990.

9...0-0 10.♗xd6

Or 10.♗xd6 ♗a5 11.♙d3 a6 12.♗c7 ♗d8
 13.♗g3 f5 14.♗xa8 ♙xc3+ 15.♗f1 ♙xb2
 16.♗e1 ♙c3 17.♗c1 f4 18.♗h4 ♙e6 0-1,
 Shahade-Kacheishvili, New York 2002.

Also very strong is 11...f5 (instead of 11...a6)
 12.exf5 a6 13.f6? ♗e8+ 14.♗f1 ♙f8 15.♗f4
 axb5 16.♗xb5 ♗e5 17.♙e2 ♙d7–+,
 G.Mukhin-Chernikov, Ozery 1997.

10...f5 11.0-0-0 ♗a5

Alternatively, 11...♗f6!? also comes into
 consideration.

12.♙c4

More thematic than 12.exf5 ♗d8 13.♗d5
 ♗xd6 14.♗xd6 ♙xc3 15.bxc3 ♙xf5 16.♙d3
 ♗d8 17.♗f6 ♗a3+ 18.♗b1 ♗d6! 19.♗xd6
 ♗xd6±, Kärner-Chernikov, 1965.

12...fxe4 12...♗d4. 13.♗cxe4 ♗b6?
 13...♗e5!±. 14.♙b3 ♙e6 15.♗d3 ♗d4
 16.♙xe6 ♗xe6 17.♗b3 ♗a6
 18.♗xf7?? 18.c3±. 18...♗xf7 19.♗d6
 ♗d4–+ Plokhushko-Chernikov, 1973.

Variation E

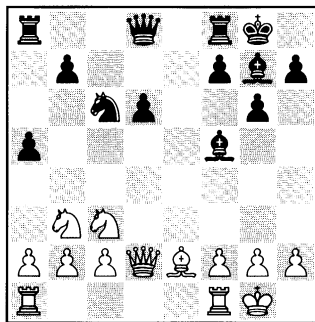
8.♗b3

A quiet continuation, usually associated
 with kingside castling.

8...♙g7 9.♙e2

Another move is 9.♙d3 0-0 10.0-0 a5 11.a4
 ♗b4 12.♗d5 ♗xd3 13.♗xd3 f5 14.c3 ♗e8
 15.exf5 ♙xf5 16.♗d2 ♗c8 17.♗d4 ♙e4±
 18.♗b5 ♗c5 19.♗e3 ♗h5 20.h3?
 (20.♗xd6±) 20...♗xh3! 21.f3 ♙xf3!
 22.gxh3 ♗g5+ 23.♗f2 ♙h6 24.♗ae1 ♙c6
 25.♗d4 ♗e4 26.♗d2 ♗f4+ 27.♗g1 ♗g3+
 28.♗g2 ♗xe3 29.♗xg3 ♗xg3+ 30.♗f2
 ♗g2+ 0-1, Tappyrov-Chernikov, 1973.

9...0-0 10.0-0 f5 11.exf5 ♙xf5 12.♗d2 a5!



Also possible is 12...♗b4 13.♙d1 ♗h4
 14.a3 ♗c6 15.g3 ♗f6 16.f4 d5 17.♙f3 d4
 18.♗e4 ♗d8± Privorotsky-Chernikov,
 1967.

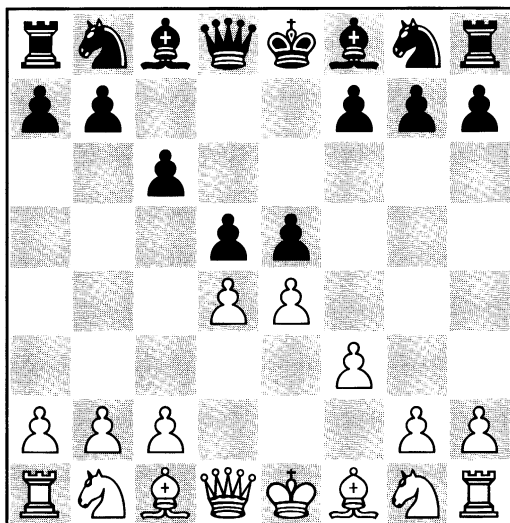
13.a3 a4 14.♗c1 d5 15.♙d3 d4
 16.♗3e2 ♙g4 17.h3 ♙d7 18.♙e4 ♗e8
 19.♗f4 ♗a5 20.♗xd4 ♗e5±
 Cherskikh-Chernikov, 1974.

Summing up, it can be stated that the 6.♙g5
 g6 system is perfectly viable and, taking ac-
 count of the surprise element, you could
 score well in practice. After all, White has to
 conduct the fight in a strategically very com-
 plicated situation. Take a chance with it!

CHAPTER 11

Ian Rogers

Caro-Kann Fantasy Variation



1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 e5!?

Combatting the Fantasy Variation – 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 – can be an annoying problem for Caro-Kann players. Transposing to a French Defence via 3...e6 4.♗e3 ♘f6 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.f4 is hardly attractive to most Caro-Kann devotees, while the main line – 3...dxe4 4.fxe4 e5 5.♘f3 gives White the type of attacking position he is hoping for when playing this line. However Black has another alternative – grabbing the initiative immediately through **1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.f3 e5!?**

The advantage of this move compared to the 3...dxe4 4.fxe4 e5 5.♘f3 line is obvious – White does not have f3 for his knight. However the disadvantage is that White can now win a pawn and try to hang on to it. The

weakness of the a7-g1 diagonal will then be of paramount importance and the soundness of 3...e5 will stand or fall on the question of whether Black's control of that diagonal is worth a pawn. In theory the compensation may not be 100% adequate but, as with the 1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♘f6 3.d4 ♗g4 4.f3 ♗f5 line – another variation where at first sight the f3 weakness could not possibly be worth a pawn, in practice Black scores well. Since after 3...e5 Black has the threat of capturing on e4 followed by 5...♖h4+, White's options are relatively limited.

4.dxe5

Grabbing the gambit pawn is the only critical continuation.

After **4.exd5** Black has a choice of attractive possibilities. The main line is **4...exd4**.

However, apart from the simple **4...Wh4+** which equalises instantly, Black can also try **4...Wxd5!?**, as played in the original **3...e5** game in 1932 between CHO'D Alexander and Sir George Thomas. To judge just how good Black's position is after **4...Wxd5**, consider the opening line **1.e4 d5 2.exd5 Wxd5 3.d4 c6** and ask yourself why any player would choose **4.f3?** here, asking for Black to blow open the position with **4...e5**. The Alexander-Thomas game continued **5.♙e3 ♘f6 6.♘e2 exd4 7.♙xd4 ♙e7 8.♘bc3 ♖a5 9.♗d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♙e6 11.♖b1 c5? 12.♙xf6 ♙xf6 13.♘d5 ♗xd2 14.♘xf6+ gxf6 15.♗xd2 ♘c6** when, even after his inferior 11th move, Black had no trouble holding a draw.

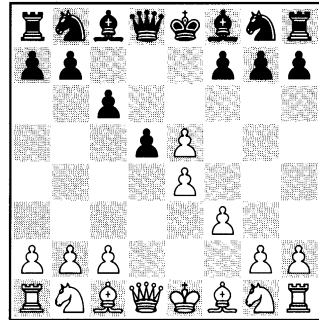
After **5.♗xd4 cxd5** White may again live to regret his **f3** move as the normal anti-isolated pawn strategies are not available. Play can continue **6.♘c3 ♙e6!?** (**6...♘f6 7.♙g5 ♙e7 8.♙d3 ♘c6 9.♗f2 0-0** also gave Black a very comfortable isolated queen's pawn position in Tereladze-Meskhi, Batumi Open 2003) **7.♙f4 ♘c6 8.♙b5 ♘f6 9.0-0-0** and now **9...♙e7** and **10...0-0-0** is probably the simplest equalising method, as opposed to **9...♗a5** which also led to no trouble at all after **10.♘h3?! (10.♘ge2) 10...0-0-0 11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.♗a4 ♗xa4 13.♘xa4 ♙xh3 14.gxh3 ½-½** Obst-Giang Nguyen, Canberra 2004.

4.♘c3 is a sensible but rarely played try. Black has always responded **4...exd4** (although **4...dxe4 5.dxe5 ♗xd1+ 6.♖xd1 exf3 7.♘xf3 ♘d7** does not seem at all dangerous for Black) **5.♗xd4 ♘f6 6.♙g5 ♙e7 7.0-0-0 8.e5** (the critical test in this line comes when White grabs the d-pawn with **8.exd5 cxd5 9.♘d5 ♘d5 10.♙xe7 ♗xe7 11.♗xd5** but after **11...♙e6 12.♗e4 ♘d7!?**

White must be prepared for a difficult defensive task ahead) **8...♘fd7 9.♙xe7 ♗xe7 10.f4 f6 11.♘f3 fxe5 12.fxe5 ♘c5** and Black had no problems, going on to win in Lutikov-Bronstein, Moscow 1972.

4.♙e2?!? is as awkward as it looks: **4...dxe4 5.fxe4 ♗h4+ 6.♘g3 ♙d6** and Black was very comfortable in Cvitanic-Trbojevic, Szeged 1994.

4.♙e3?!? dxe4 5.♙c4 has been tried as a Blackmar-Diemer style gambit, but after **5...♘h6! 6.♗d2 (6.♙xh6 ♗h4+) 6...♘f5** White is already worse.



4...♙c5

Here **4...dxe4!?** leads to a highly unpleasant endgame after **5.♗xd8+ ♖xd8 6.fxe4 ♙e6 7.♘f3 ♘d7 8.♙f4 ♙e7 9.♘bd2 ♘g6 10.♙g3** when Black will probably never regain his pawn.

Therefore the choice for Black is between the text move and **4...♗b6!?** – the first of many moments when Black can choose to play **...♗b6**.

After **4...♗b6** White's best is to transpose back to the main line with **5.♘c3**. Alternatives also tend to transpose back to **4...♙c5**, e.g.

– **5.♙d3 ♙c5** will lead to **4...♙c5** lines, al-

though Galkin tried 5...dxe4!? 6.♙xe4 ♖a5+ 7.♗c3 ♚xe5 and held off White's development advantage after 8.♗ge2 ♗f6 9.♙f4 ♖a5 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.♖e1 0-0 12.♗d5!? ♚c5+ 13.♙e3 cxd5! 14.♙xh7+ ♗xh7 15.♙xc5 ♙xc5+ with an unbalanced struggle which was drawn ten moves later in Ivanov-Galkin, St Petersburg 1993.

– 5.g3!? is not as silly as it looks, but after 5...♙c5 6.♗h3 (the point) 6...dxe4 7.fxg4 ♙e6 followed by ...♗d7 and ...0-0-0, Black has more than enough for the pawn.
– 5.exd5 ♙c5 transposes to variations considered under 4...♙c5.

After 5.♗c3 Black may have nothing better than 5...♙c5 since 5...d4?! 6.♗ce2 c5?! (6...♙c5 is a better try) 7.♗f4 ♗e7 8.♗d5 ♗xd5 9.exd5 c4 10.♗e2 ♙c5 11.♗g3 ♗d7 12.f4 should have proved far too extravagant for Black in Butkiewicz-Maciaga, Wysowa 2003. (Black won anyway.)

5.♗c3

The only good way to prevent Black from causing havoc with 5...♖b6.

The most popular alternative to 5.♗c3 is 5.♙d3 and since the frequently played 5...♖b6 has some problems, there may be a need to investigate:

– 5...dxe4!? 6.♙xe4 ♙f2+ 7.♗e2 ♚xd1+ 8.♗xd1 ♗d7 9.f4 f6!? which may be playable for Black, although few 3...e5 players seem to want to steer towards an endgame.
– 5...♙e6 has been tried a number of times and looks rather insipid. However after 6.♗c3 Black can try 6...♖b6! (not 6...f6?! 7.exd5 cxd5 8.♖e2! ♙d4 9.♗b5 fxg5 Vasconcellos-Anic, Paris 1993, and now White could have secured a huge advantage after 10.♗xd4 ♖h4+ 11.g3 ♚xd4 12.c3 ♖b6 13.♖xe5) with the idea that after 7.♗a4?! (7.♗ge2! is the real test of Black's plan) 7...♖a5+ 8.c3 ♙xg1 9.♙xg1 dxe4 hits a bishop, enabling Black to cap-

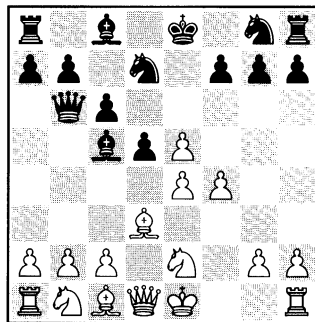
ture on e5 with a much better version of the main ♗c3-a4 line.

– 5...♙xg1?! 6.♙xg1 ♖h4+ 7.g3 ♖xh2 8.♙e3 when White has the two bishops at no cost.

6.♗e2 ♗d7. As usual in this line, the check on f2 should usually be kept in reserve. It is less precise to play:

– 6...dxe4 in view of 7.♙xe4! (and not 7.fxg4?! ♗d7 8.♙f4 ♙f2+ 9.♗f1 ♙e3! when Black will win back the pawn with a superior pawn structure) 7...♗d7 8.f4.
– 6...♙f2+?! 7.♗f1 ♗d7 8.f4 ♗e7 9.♗bc3 leaves the bishop on f2 misplaced and 10.♗a4 in the air.

7.f4



Only hanging on to the e pawn makes sense as can be seen from:

– 7.exd5 ♗xe5 8.♗f4 ♗f6 9.♗c3 g5 10.♖e2 (10.♗fe2 ♗xf3+! is Black's idea) and now instead of 10...0-0? 11.♖xe5 ♙e8 12.♗e6! as in Müller-Bruchmann, Germany 1997, Black should have played 10...♙d6 11.♗h3 ♙xh3 12.gxh3 0-0-0 with a dangerous initiative.

– 7.♙f4 ♗e7 8.♗bc3 d4 9.♗a4 ♖a5+ 10.c3 dxc3 11.♗axc3 ♗g6 and Black was fine in Mashinskaya-Chasovnikova, Moscow RUS Women's Ch. 1999.

7...♗h6!?. Now the threat of 8...♗g4 gives White something to worry about.

Black can also try interpolating

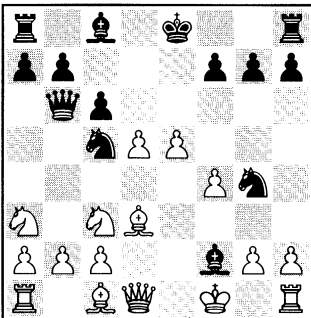
7...dxe4 8.♙xe4 before 8...♖h6 but this also runs into 9.♗ec3! (9.c3, intending 10.♗d4, is less incisive in view of 9...♙f2+ 10.♗f1 ♗c5 11.♗d2 ♙e6 12.♗d4 and now instead of 12...♙e3?! as in Thornert-Livner, Borlange 1995, Black should play 12...♙xd4 13.cxd4 ♗xe4 14.♗xe4 0-0 with ample compensation for the pawn) 9...♙f2+ 10.♗f1 ♗c5 11.♗d2! and the threat of 12.♗c4 gives White the edge, e.g. 11...♙e6 12.f5!.

8.♗ec3!

– 8.h3 wastes an important tempo and after 8...♙f2+ 9.♗f1 dxe4 10.♙xe4 ♗c5 11.♗d2 ♙e6 12.g4?! (12.b4!/? has the clever idea 12...♗xb4? 13.c3 ♗b6 14.♗b1, but instead Black can play 12...♗a6 when Black is fine after both 13.a3 0-0-0 and 13.f5!/? ♗xf5 14.♙xf5 ♙xf5 15.♗c4 ♗d8! 16.♗d6+ ♗xd6 17.♗xd6 ♙h4) 12...0-0-0 13.♗c3 ♙e3 14.f5 ♗xe4 15.♗cxe4 ♙d5 16.♗d6+ ♗xd6 17.exd6 ♗d4!, Black soon won in Nikolova-Frenklakh, Zagan 1997.

– 8.♗g3 ♙f2+ 9.♗f1 ♗c5 10.♗f3? ♙d4! when the dual threats of ...♙g4 and ...♙xb2 win for Black, Elgaard-Hartvig, Hedehusene 1994.

8...♙f2+ 9.♗f1 ♗c5 10.exd5 ♗g4 11.♗a3



It is not clear where Black's attack is going. So 5...♙d3 ♗b6 is currently under a cloud.

Other fifth moves for White are less testing. 5.♗e2 is a curious plan, intending to bring the king's knight to c3. Not surprisingly, Black has many attractive options:

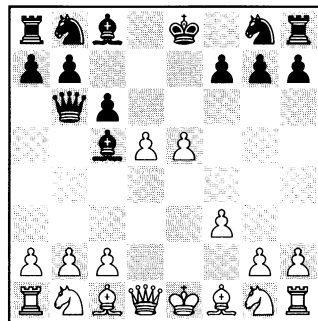
5...♗d7

– 5...♗b6!/? 6.♗ec3 ♙f2+ 7.♗e2 ♙d4 should be enough to turn most players off this idea for White, while

– 5...dxe4 6.♗xd8+ ♗xd8 7.fxe4 ♗d7 8.♙f4 ♗e7 is a safe enough equalising method for the faint-hearted.

6.♗ec3 ♗xe5 7.exd5 ♗h4+ 8.g3 ♗e7 9.♗e4 ♗f6 10.♗bc3 ♗xd5 11.♗xd5 ♗xf3+! 12.♗xf3 cxd5 13.♙b5+ ♗f8 14.♙d3 dxe4 15.♗xe4 ♙h3 16.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 and Black eventually converted his tiny endgame advantage in Smagin-Meduna, Prague 1992. However Meduna could have saved himself a lot of trouble had he played 10...♗xe4! 11.♗xe4 ♙f5 when White has difficulties in surviving the opening.

Of course if White tries to be greedy with 5.exd5 then 5...♗b6 causes big problems for White (although 5...cxd5 6.♙b5+ ♗c6 is not bad either).

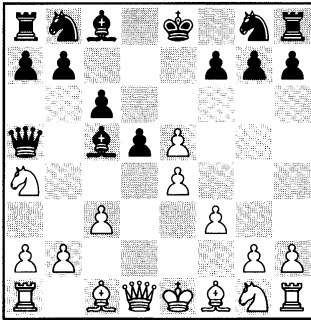


White is then forced to play 6.♗h3 (the Bronstein-like 6.d6!/? ♙f2+ 7.♗e2 ♙xg1 8.♗d3 actually secured a full point in the game Agomeri-Boccia Mattia, Italy 1997,

after 8...♙d4 9.♗d2 ♙e6 10.f4 but the result would have been reversed had Black found 8...♗d7! 9.f4 ♖f2+ 10.♙d1 ♗c5 when the threat of 11...♙g4+ decides) 6...♙xh3 7.gxh3 and now Black should probably play 7...♖b4+ (7...♙f2+!? 8.♙e2 ♙d4! and the similar 7...cxd5!? 8.♗c3 ♙f2+ 9.♙e2 ♙d4! give excellent value for a pawn as well) forcing 8.♖d2 (since 8.♗c3 ♖h4+ 9.♙e2 ♖f2+ 10.♙d3 ♖d4+ and 8.c3 ♖h4+ 9.♙d2 ♗d7 are dreadful for White). Then after 8...♖h4+ 9.♙d1 ♗d7, White will need to play well just to survive.

5...♗e7!?

Not many players have been willing to try this move, which argues that the weaknesses in White's position are long-term and do not need to be exploited immediately. Most players prefer 5...♖b6 but it is far from clear that the main line 6.♗a4! ♖a5+ 7.c3



is satisfactory for Black. Black should continue 7...♙xg1 (7...♙f8 is hardly in the spirit of the variation, and after 8.b4 ♖c7 9.cxd5 ♖xe5+ 10.♖e2 ♖xe2+ 11.♗xe2 even a player as strong as Vladimir Tukmakov was not able to hold the resulting endgame in Gallagher-Tukmakov, Geneva 1994) 8.♙xg1

Inserting 8.b4 ♖c7 before 9.♙xg1 is not helpful because of 9...♗e7! (9...♖xe5 10.♖d4 ♗d7 (10...♖xd4 11.cxd4 dxe4

12.fxe4 gives White a safe advantage, with the pair of bishops and big pawn centre) 11.♖xe5+ ♗xe5 12.exd5 cxd5 13.♙f4f6 14.0-0-0 and White was well on top in Smagin-Berg, Copenhagen 1993) 10.exd5 ♖xe5+ 11.♙f2 (on 11.♖e2 ♖xh2!? is playable for Black) 11...0-0 12.d6!? ♗d8 13.♖e1 ♖xd6 14.♙g5 ♗e8 15.♗d1 ♖c7 when White's slightly exposed king counter-balanced his initiative in Mitkov-Izeta, San Sebastian 1993. Note that White gains nothing here by playing 16.♙f4?! ♖xf4 17.♖xe7 due to the simple 17...♙d7!.

8...dxe4 and now White should preserve the e5 pawn, although exactly how is far from clear. The obvious move is 9.f4! but there are two other serious options:

- 9.♙f4 ♗d7! (dubious is 9...♗e7 10.b4! ♖d5 (10...♖c7 11.♖d6±) 11.c4 ♖xd1+ (11...♖e6 12.♗c5 ♖f5 13.♙g3 ♗g6 14.♗xe4 0-0 15.♗d6 ♖e6 16.f4 ♖e7 17.c5 and White had the advantage in Kalendovsky-Mlynek, Brno 1999) 12.♗xd1 ♗g6 13.♙g3 ♗d7 14.f4 with a typical endgame where White's bishops and space advantage are worth a lot) 10.b4 ♖d8 11.♖d4 ♗e7 12.♖xe4 ♗d5 and Black probably has enough for his pawn, e.g. 13.♙d2 (13.0-0-0 a5! 14.b5 (14.e6 ♗7f6!∞) 14...♖e7 is a total mess) 13...0-0 14.♙d3 ♗5f6 15.♖d4 ♗xe5! and Black was already slightly better in Wartlick-Metz, Schwäbisch Gmünd 2001.

- 9.♖d4 exf3 (9...♗e7 is well met by 10.♙g5! ♗g6 (10...♗f5?! 11.♖xe4 0-0 12.g4± Czebe-Stummer, Budapest 1993; 10...f6 11.exf6 ♖xg5 12.fxe7±) 11.♗c5 0-0 12.h4 b6? (12...♗e8 13.♗xe4 ♗xe5 14.b4 ♖c7 15.h5±) 13.♗xe4± and Black was in dreadful trouble in Beblík-Franke, Germany 2001) 10.♙f4 (10.gxf3 may be a better try, but Black should be OK after

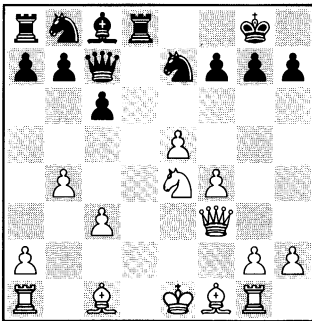
10...♟e7 10...♞e7 was satisfactory for Black in Priser-Theon, Guingamp 2002.

9...♞e7 Not the only option:

– After 9...♞d7 10.b4 ♟d8 11.♟d4 Black should resist the temptation to grab the h-pawn and play 11...♞e7 12.♟xe4 0-0 13.♟d2 b5 14.♞c5?! ♞xc5 15.bxc5 ♟f5 16.♟f3 f6 17.g4 ♟e6 18.exf6 ♟xf6 19.f5 ♟d5 20.♟g3 ♟f8 when Black was very active and went on to win in Tirard-Giffard, Hamburg 1996. However White can improve with 14.♞b2 when Black's compensation for the pawn is nebulous.

– However 9...♟e6?! is not to be recommended. After 10.b4 ♟c7 11.♞c5 the bishop on e6 proved to be misplaced in Torok-Balogh, Hungary 1999.

10.b4 (10.g4!?! ♞d7 11.b4 ♟d8! 12.♟d4 0-0 13.♟xe4 is similar to the game Tirard-Giffard but with the strange g4 thrown in. Black should have ample counterplay after 13...♞d5) **10...♟c7 11.♞c5 0-0 12.♞xe4 ♟d8 13.♟f3**



At first sight Black has nothing for the pawn but as usual in this line, the lack of pawn protection for the White king can tell in the long run. In the game Maslak-Martynov, Serpukhov 1999, Black generated sufficient counterplay after **13...a5! 14.bxa5 ♟xa5 15.♟e2 ♞a6 16.♟e3 ♞f5** 17.♟f2 ♟e6 **18.g4 ♞xe3 19.♟xe3 ♞c7 20.c4 b5** but if

you do not trust Black's compensation in such positions, 5...♟b6 will not be your choice.

However **5...♟e6!?** is worthy of attention. The bishop on e6 can be vulnerable to a later f4-f5 but first White must find a useful developing move. (As usual, exchanging on d5 gives away the c6 square to the Black knight and makes Black's life easy.) White should probably try **6.♟d3** (6.♞ge2?! ♟b6 7.♞f4 ♟f2+ 8.♟e2 ♟d4 9.exd5 cxd5 10.♟e3 ♞c6 11.♟xd4 ♞xd4+ 12.♟e1 ♞e7 and Black was in control in Czebe-Szabolcsi, Budapest 1998, since 13.♞a4 allows 13...♞xc2+!). Note that 6.f4?! ♟b6! is even worse, e.g. 7.♞f3? ♟f2+ 8.♟e2 dxe4 and Black wins) and now Black can switch plans with **6...♟b6!?** because 7.♞a4?! ♟a5+ 8.c3 ♟xg1 9.♟xg1 dxe4 10.♟xe4 ♟xe5 is at least equal for Black. However White can improve with 7.♞ge2, when Black should probably disrupt the White king with **7...♟f2+ 8.♟f1 ♟h4**, with a messy position with which Black should not be too unhappy.

6.♟d3

Clearly, 6.exd5 cxd5 7.♟d3 0-0 8.f4 ♞bc6 9.♟h5 g6 10.♟h4 f6! gives precisely the sort of wide open position Black dreams of when playing this line. After 11.♞f3 (11.exf6 can be met by 11...♟e8!?! – 11...♞f5 12.f7+! ♟g7 13.♟xd8 ♟xd8 is only equal – with the idea 12.fxe7? ♟xe7!, winning) 11...♞f5 12.♟h3 fxe5 and Black was already well on top in Libiszewski-Sulava, Monaco IM 2003.

In Mannion-Gormally, British Championship 2004, 6.f4 worked out well for White after **6...♟b4?! 7.♞f3 0-0 8.♟d2 ♟xc3 9.♟xc3 ♟b6 10.♟d3 ♞a6 11.♟e2 ♞c5 12.0-0-0** and Black had nothing for the pawn. However, 6...♟b6 looks logical, since 7.♞a4 allows **7...♟b4+**. After **6...♟b6 7.♞f3 ♟f2+ 8.♟e2**

♙c5, 9.♘a4 is still not playable so Black will have time to start developing.

6...0-0!

Continuing to play calmly. Of course it was still possible to play 6...♖b6, transposing to positions similar to those considered earlier after 7.♘ge2. Note once again that the position of the bishop on d3 makes 7.♘a4?! unplayable in view of 7...♗a5+ 8.c3 ♙xg1 9.♚xg1 dxe4.

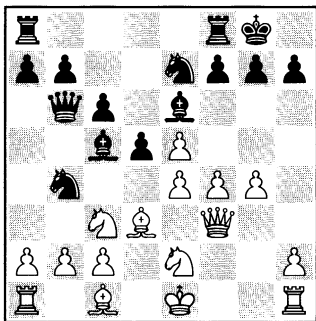
7.f4 ♘a6!? 8.♗f3

8.♘f3 is the critical test of Black's play. Can Black really have enough for the pawn in this position? I doubt it, yet I also had my doubts about Black's compensation in the game continuation and even after exchanges, Black wins the game fairly comfortably. So presumably Black would reply 8...♘b4, capture the bishop and then try to show that White's pawn centre (and king) are not going anywhere.

8...♗b6 9.♘ge2 ♘b4 10.g4?!

If White wants to play f5 and shut the c8 bishop out of the game, he should do so immediately.

10...♙e6!



11.♙f1

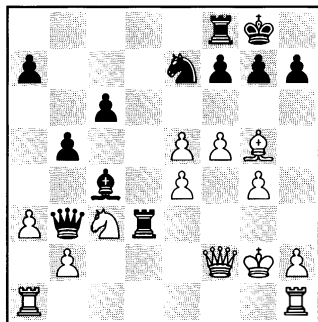
A sign that not all is well with White's position. However after 11.f5 dxe4 12.♙xe4 ♙d5, Black's pieces coordinate beautifully

and the e5 pawn may soon come under attack with ...♙e8.

11...♘d3 12.cxd3 ♚ad8 13.♘a4 ♗a5 14.♘xc5 ♗xc5 15.♘c3

In theory the exchanges should have eased White's position, yet the king on f1 remains a big handicap, e.g. 15.f5 dxe4 16.dxe4 and now Black can choose between 16...♗xe5!?

16...♙e5! 15...b5! 16.♗f2 ♗b4 17.f5 dxe4! 18.a3 ♗b3 19.dxe4 ♚d3! 20.♙g5 ♙c4 21.♙g2



21...♙g6!

Now the knight is invulnerable and the fall of the e5 pawn will cause total collapse in the white position.

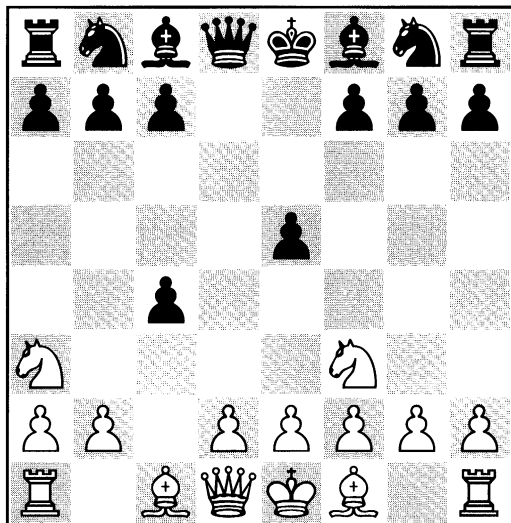
22.♘e2 ♗xb2! 23.♘c1 ♘h4+!

On 24.♙xh4, ♚d2 wins easily. This was the game Mitkov-Kallai, French Teams Ch. 1994, a convincing advertisement for 3...e5. However it should be clear from many of the examples given in this article that to play 3...e5 requires strong nerves, an ability to ignore your opponent's extra pawn and big centre and a sense of exactly the right moment to play ...♗b6. Just bear in mind that it needs even better nerves to play White – caught by surprise on the third move, keeping your king in the centre and under constant threat along the a7-g1 diagonal.

CHAPTER 12

Jeroen Bosch

A Central Thrust in the Réti



3...e5!? – Unhinging your opponent

When playing Black against the Réti it is not so easy to create unbalanced positions. On the whole, the play after 1.♘f3 tends to be less theoretical (unless White transposes to 1.d4 positions, of course, as Kramnik was wont to do). Equalizing is perhaps not your biggest worry as Black; unhinging your opponent is a lot trickier, though. In a previous SOS chapter I have made a case for 1...b5, but this may not be to everybody's taste (see Chapter 14 of *Secrets of Opening Surprises*). The present chapter advocates a bold central thrust – 3...e5!? – brainchild of that sacrificial genius Rudolf Spielmann.

1.♘f3 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘a3

We will focus on this move, clearly one of

the main options in this position. Below you will find a list of White's alternatives, accompanied by some SOS suggestions.

● **3.e4!?** c5 4.♗xc4 ♘c6 5.0-0 e6 6.♘c3 a6 is a reliable set-up for Black. For example, 7.d3 ♘f6 8.e5 ♘d7 9.♞e1 ♗e7 10.♗f4 0-0 11.a3 b5 12.♗a2 ♗b7, with approximately equal chances in the game Krasenkow-Volzshin, Koszalin 1998.

● **3.g3**, when in practice Black often plays 3...g6 4.♗g2 ♗g7 5.♘a3 c5 6.♘xc4 ♘c6. Now after 7.0-0 the Black knight can be developed to the edge of the board with 7...♘h6!?, when 8.d3 ♘f5 gives equality.

● **3.♗a4+**, and now 3...♘d7 is most popular, e.g. 4.g3 a6 5.♗xc4 b5. Instead of 4.g3

White can also play 4.♖xc4 a6 5.d4 e6 6.♙g5 ♘gf6 7.♗c3 b5 8.♗b3 ♙b7 9.♞d1 c5= Vaulin-Sherbakov, Novgorod 1997. Slav players may prefer 3...c6 in answer to the queen check. More original than either of these moves is the manoeuvre 3...♗d7 4.♖xc4 ♖c6 to force a queen swap; now 5.b3 is best met by 5...♙e6.

● **3.e3** is the main alternative to 3.♗a3. My SOS recommendation is 3...♙e6, an original move devised by Keres.

Now the lines fork:

– 4.♗g5 ♙d5 5.e4 ♙c6 6.♙xc4 e6 7.d4 (here serious attention should be paid to 7.d3, e.g. 7...♗f6 8.0-0 h6 9.♗f3 ♙e7 10.♗c3 0-0 11.♗e2± Van der Sterren-Flear, Wijk aan Zee 1987) 7...♙e7 8.h4 ♗f6 9.♗c3 h6 10.♗xe6!? fxe6 11.e5 ♗d5 12.♗g4? (12.♗h5+! ♗d7! 13.♙xd5 ♙xd5 14.♗xd5 exd5 15.♗g4+, with a perpetual, Taimanov) 12...b5 13.♙b3 b4 14.♗xe6 bxc3 15.♗g6+ ♗f8 16.bxc3 ♙e8, and White does not have enough and lost in Darga-Keres, Beverwijk 1964.

– 4.♗a3 ♗f6 5.♗xc4 g6 (5...♙d5 introducing a set-up with e6, c5 and ♙e7 is also playable) 6.b4!? (6.b3 ♙g7 7.♙b2 0-0 8.♙e2 c5 9.0-0 ♗c6 10.♞c1 ♞c8 11.d4 cxd4 12.♗xd4 Geller-Keres, Moscow 1963, and now Suetin's recommendation 12...♗xd4, with equality) 6...♙g7 7.♙b2 0-0 8.♙e2 ♗c6 9.a3 ♖d5 10.0-0 a5 11.bxa5 ♗xa5 12.♗xa5 ♖xa5 13.♙c3 ♖a4= Kozul-Sokolov, Sarajevo 2003.

3...e5!?

The main line is 3...c5, and after 4.♗xc4 ♗c6 5.g3 either 5...f6 or 5...g6. The text was first played by Spielmann in 1925. Black grabs a lot of space and will be able to develop his pieces quickly from now on. Clearly the nature of the position is radically changed with this bold central thrust. Play becomes 'forced' and the price of each move increases.

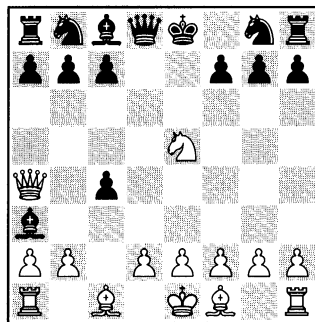
4.♗xe5

The only serious reply. Note that after 4.♗xc4? e4 the modest 5.♗g1 is forced, since 5.♗fe5? f6 loses a piece.

4...♙xa3

Pure tactics. Now 5.bxa3 fails to the double attack 5...♖d4. So White's reply is again forced.

5.♖a4+



An interesting position has arisen, Black is at a crossroads. The few theoretical works that mention 3...e5 devote their attention to 5...b5 (perhaps because of a neat tactical trap mentioned below). However, there is no objective reason to neglect 5...♗d7 which, in my opinion, contains more venom.

We will investigate:

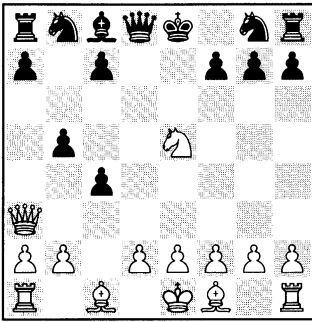
- A) 5...b5
- B) 5...♗d7

Variation A

5...b5

This was Spielmann's choice in the stem game against Euwe in 1925. Black forces 6.♖xa3, as 6.♖xb5+ c6 7.♗xc6 ♗xc6 8.♖xc6+ ♙d7 9.♖e4+ ♙e7 is a lot better for Black – the piece is much more important than the three pawns.

6.♖xa3



Time to take stock. Black has the freer game (his pawn on c4 gives him a space advantage for the moment), and easy development. White has some important structural advantages, though. Apart from the bishop pair, his pawn structure is also more solid. Black has weakened his queenside with 5...b5. Somewhat annoyingly, Black cannot castle kingside so easily, since the White queen is eyeing the f8 square from a3. Usually, Black will therefore play ♖d6 at some point. This means taking the game into an endgame which should suit White because of his bishop pair. In addition, Black must take care not to fall into a trap based on a combination of the weakness of the a8-h1 diagonal and square f7. Taking all factors into account, we must assess White's game as preferable.

6...d3

The best move, given the circumstances. Immediately losing is 6...♗d6?? 7.♗f3. Also bad is 6...e7, as in the game Novak-Nun, Stary Smokovec 1980. Instead of the game continuation 7.d3?, White can win on the spot with 7.♗xf7! ♗xf7 8.♗f3+--. Changing the move order does not work, though – after 7.♗f3 Black has 7...♗d5.

The stem game went: 6...♗d5 7.♗f3 (7.♗g3!? looks good too) 7...d3 8.♗xd5 dxd5 9.g3 f6 10.♗g2 ♗b7 11.dg4 h5 12.d3 e3 13.♗xb7 d2+ 14.♗d1 ♗xa1

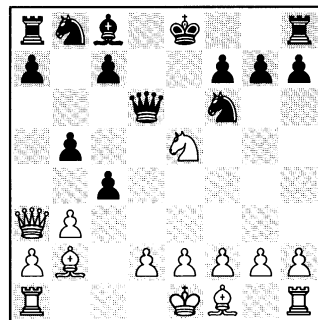
15.♗xa8 c6 16.d3 ♗d7 17.♗e3 cxd3 18.exd3 ♗a6 19.♗xc6+ ♗xc6 20.♗d2± Euwe-Spielmann, Wiesbaden 1925. Euwe failed to bring home his advantage, though. In the same year Spielmann also tried 6...♗b7. After 7.e3 ♗d6 8.♗xd6 cxd6 9.♗f3 d6 10.b3 d5 11.bxc4 dxc4 12.a4! ♗a6 (12...a6 13.♗b1) 13.♗b2 f6 14.d3± he was again in dire straits, and lost in Tartakower-Spielmann, Moscow 1925. Still, this game apparently did not dishearten anyone. In this period we also saw:

– 7.b3 ♗d6 8.♗b2 f6 9.♗xd6 cxd6 10.d3 cxb3 11.d4 a6 12.axb3 ♗d7 13.d5 g6 14.e3 ♗e6 15.♗c1 d6 16.g3±, although Black won eventually, Torre-Ed.Lasker, Chicago 1926. See below.

– 7.d3 ♗d6 8.♗xd6 cxd6 9.♗f3 cxd3 10.♗f4 d6 11.♗xd6± was Réti-Tartakower, Bad Homburg 1927. And this game ended in a draw.

7.d3

The following tactical trap deserves a mention: after 7.b3 ♗d6 White should avoid the natural 8.♗b2? because of



8...c3!. The point is 9.♗xd6 cxd6! when White gets only two pawns for his piece. Instead of the unfortunate bishop move White should exchange queens. A fine example (from Black's point of view) is Claesen-Motwani, Belgium tt 2002:

8. ♖xd6 cxd6 9. ♜f3 ♘c6 10. a4 ♘b4 11. ♘d4 cxb3 12. axb5 ♙e6 13. f3 ♚c8 14. ♘d1 ♘c2 15. ♘xc2 ♚xc2 and Black's game is clearly preferable.

Stronger than 7.b3 is 7. ♖f3. After 7... ♖d5 8.d3 White preserves a slight edge after both:

– 8... cxd3 9. ♖xd5 ♘xd5 10. ♘xd3 0-0 11. g3± Cobb-Duncan, England 1999/00, and
 – 8... ♙e6 9. ♖xd5 ♘xd5 10. ♙d2 cxd3 11. e4 ♘b6 12. ♙xd3 a6 13. b3 f6 14. ♘f3± Shamkovich-Estrin, Moscow City Championship 1964.

7... ♖d6

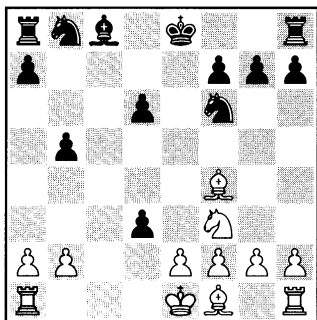
As mentioned above, Black can hardly do without this move. He needs to castle at some point. Still, White's bishop pair will now become a force to be reckoned with.

8. ♖xd6 cxd6 9. ♘f3 cxd3

In Alvarez-Pina, Matanzas 1992, White was better after 9... ♘c6 10. ♙d2 cxd3 11. ♚c1 ♘e5 12. ♘xe5 dxe5 13. ♚c5 0-0 14. exd3.

10. ♙f4

Active play by White. Also good is 10.e3 ♘c6 11. ♙xd3 ♚b8 12. 0-0 ♘e5 13. ♙e2 ♘xf3+ Wexler-Dodero, Mar del Plata 1955, and now 14. ♙xf3 rather than the game continuation 14.gxf3. In his book on the Réti, Osnos rightly indicates 11... a6 12. ♙d2 ♘e5 13. ♙e2 as very pleasant for White.



10...0-0

Or 10... dxe2 11. ♙xe2 0-0 12. 0-0 and

White's bishops promise him the edge.

11. e3 ♘c6 12. ♚c1 ♙b7 13. ♙xd3± a6 14. ♘e2 d5 15. ♚hd1 ♖fe8 16. ♙f5 g6 17. ♙h3 ♘g7 18. ♘d4 ♘xd4+ 19. ♖xd4 ♙c8 20. ♙xc8 ♚axc8 21. ♚xc8 ♖xc8 22. ♙e5+- g5 23. ♖xd5 ♚c6 24. ♚d6 ♖xd6 25. ♙xd6 ♘e4? 26. ♙e7 f6 27. f3 ♘f7 28. ♙a3 1-0

Nybäck-Deva, Halkidiki 2001.

Variation B

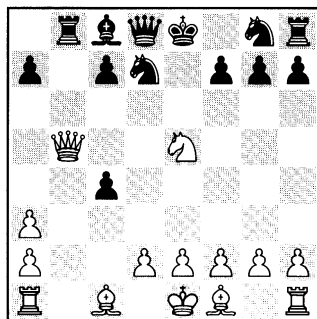
5... ♘d7

First played by Edward Lasker, who had earlier used 5... b5 in a game against Carlos Torre (see Variation A; the note to 6... ♘f6). The text was, in fact, a suggestion of Ossip Bernstein's in a private discussion with Edward Lasker. Black does not weaken his position (as he does with 5... b5) but simply continues his development. His intention is to sacrifice the c4-pawn for a considerable lead in development.

6. ♘d7

This is most logical. However, White may try to preserve the pressure with 6. bxa3!?. The simple 6... c6 fails to give Black equality: 7. ♘xc4 ♖e7±. After 6... ♘f6 7. ♘xc4 0-0 Black is a pawn down, although he may treasure some hope on account of his lead in development.

Probably insufficient is the ultra-sharp 6... b5!? 7. ♖xb5 ♚b8:

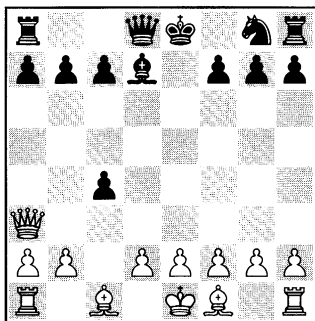


A) 8.♖c6 ♖b6
 – 9.♖a4 and now either 9...♗f6 or 9...♗a6
 10.♖b5 ♖b6, with a draw by repetition.
 – 9.♖d5 ♗f6 10.f4 ♘e7 11.♖xc4 ♘xe5
 12.fxe5 ♗xe5 13.♖c3 ♖xc3 14.dxc3, with
 equal chances.

B) 8.♖a4 ♗f6 9.♘d7 (or 9.f4!?)
 9...♗xd7 10.♖xa7 ♖b6
 – 11.♖a8+ ♘e7 12.♖e4+ ♗e6 13.♖b1 ♖b6
 is a curious geometrical draw.
 – 11.♖b1! ♗xb1 12.♖a8+ followed by
 13.♖e4 check picking up the rook. Still
 Black has some compensation for his
 two-pawn deficit after 12...♗c8 13.♖e4+
 ♘e7 14.♖xb1 0-0, when Black is fully de-
 veloped and White's pieces are all on the
 first rank. Food for thought.

The safest answer to 6.bxa3 is 6...a6. In the
 game Tiggelman-Martyn, Belgium 1999,
 Black had good chances after 7.♗b2 b5
 8.♖c2 ♘e5 9.♗xe5 ♘f6 10.♗d1 ♖e7
 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.d3 ♖xa3 13.dxc4 ♖b4+
 14.♗d2 ♗e6. Instead of 7.♗b2 it is better to
 play 7.♘xc4, as 7...b5? fails to 8.♘d6+!. So
 Black should simply continue his develop-
 ment with 7...♘f6.

6...♗xd7 7.♖xa3



7...♘e7!

Preparing to castle and showing Black's
 willingness to sacrifice a pawn.
 In practice Black has done well with other
 moves too.

● 7...♗e6!? 8.e3 (8.♖g3!? ♘f6!? 9.♖xg7
 ♗g8 10.♖h6 ♖e7 with compensation)
 8...♘f6 9.d3 (9.♗e2 ♖e7) 9...cxd3 10.♗xd3
 ♖e7 11.♖xe7+ ♘xe7 12.0-0 ♗hd8 13.♗e2
 c5, and Black had an easy game in
 Horowitz-Tenner, Bradley Beach 1928.

● 7...♘f6 8.e3 (8.♖c5!?) 8...♘g4!?
 (8...♗e6 transposes to the previous note)
 9.♗e2 ♖h4 10.♗xg4 ♖xg4 was about equal
 in M.S.Hansen-T.Christensen, Tjalfe 1995.
 More ambitious is 9.♗xc4 (instead of
 9.♗e2). Play becomes very sharp after
 9...♖h4 10.g3 ♗f6 11.0-0 ♘e5 (11...♖f3
 12.e4! ♖xe4 13.d3±) 12.♗d5 ♘f3+, with
 the following possibilities:

- 13.♘h1?? ♖f5 14.♗xb7 ♖h3–+.
- 13.♗xf3 ♖xf3 14.e4 ♖xe4± 15.d3 ♖e7
 or 15...♖d5.
- 13.♘g2! ♘g5 14.f4 ♗h3+ 15.♘g1 0-0-0
 (15...♗xf1 16.♗xb7 ♗d8 17.♖a4+ ♘f8
 18.♘xf1±) 16.♖b3 c6, with roughly equal
 chances.

8.♖c3

This double attack picks up the c4 pawn. The
 move 8.e4 refuses to take the pawn, but fails to
 achieve anything. The game Roe-Motwani,
 British Championship 1986, went 8...♗c6
 9.♗xc4 ♗xe4 10.0-0 0-0 11.d3 ♗d5 12.♗g5.
 The weakness on d3 is compensated for by the
 bishop pair and some temporary activity.
 12...f6 13.♗f4 ♗f7 14.♗fe1 ♘g6 (14...c6 is
 solid, but Motwani prefers to attack) 15.♗g3
 f5 16.♗e5 f4 17.♖b3 ♗xc4 (17...c6) 18.dxc4
 and now 18...♖g5?! was perhaps too sharp.
 The alternative 18...c6 yields equal chances.

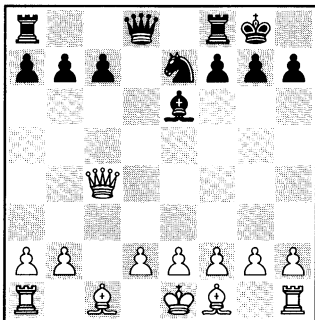
8...0-0

This was Black's intention; at the cost of one
 pawn he will gain a big lead in development.
 One more suggestion for the reader: is
 8...♗e6 9.♖xg7 ♗g8 10.♖xh7 ♖d7, plan-
 ning to castle queenside, really too wild?

9.♖xc4 ♗e6

The game Century-Thomas, British Cham-
 pionship, Brighton 1977, saw a completely

different set-up: 9...♟f5 10.e3 ♘c6 11.♞g4 ♞f6 12.♙e2 ♜fe8 13.0-0 ♞ad8. Black has compensation due to his lead in development. The game continued 14.d3 ♙d7 15.♞f4 c5 16.♚b1 ♞g6 17.♙d2 ♙c6 18.f3 (18.♙f3 ♙xf3 19.♞xf3 ♞xd3; 18.♞g4 ♟d4 19.exd4 ♜xe2 20.♞xg6 hxg6; 18.♙g4 ♟h4; 18.g3 ♟d4) 18...♟d4 19.♚be1 ♟xe2+ 20.♜xe2 ♞xd3. with equality. Perhaps White could have improved on move 17: 17.♚e1 ♙c6 18.g3 (18.♙f1 ♞xd3; 18.♞g4 ♞xg4 19.♙xg4 ♟h4 20.e4 ♞xd3 21.♙g5 ♟g6=) 18...♟d4 (18...♙b5) 19.exd4 ♜xe2 20.♜xe2 ♞xd3 21.♚e1 ♞xb1. Now everything would be OK for Black if it wasn't for 22.d5!± ♜e8 (22...♙xd5?? 23.♞d6+−) 23.♜xe8+ ♙xe8 24.♞e5 ♞xc1+ 25.♟g2 ♟f8 26.♞d6+ ♟g8 27.♞e7 g6 28.♞xe8+ ♟g7 29.♞e5+ ♟g8 30.d6, and White should win this queen ending.



This position is critical for the evaluation of 5...♟d7.

In his *Chess Secrets I learned from the Masters* (1951), Edward Lasker aptly summarizes White's predicament: 'White is a Pawn ahead and he has two Bishops. But how is he going to get his pieces out? No matter where the Queen moves, she will be subject to further attack by the Black minor pieces, as they gradually occupy the most aggressive posts they can find.' (p. 363, Dover, 1969)

10.♞a4

Understandably, White moves his queen somewhat 'out of reach'. On f4, h4 or c3 the queen can easily be attacked by the knight (10.♞f4 ♟d5; 10.♞h4 ♞d7; 10.♞c3 ♟d5). While 10.♞d3 is too ugly to consider (10...♞xd3, with excellent compensation). The game Lagrain-Versyck, Belgium 1998, went: 10.♞c2 ♟c6 11.e4 (11.e3 ♟b4) 11...♟d4 12.♞c3 ♜e8 (12...c5) 13.b3 ♙d5 14.f3 ♞f6 15.♙b2 c5 16.♙c4 and now, instead of 16...♞ad8?, Black should have played 16...♙xc4!, with a distinct advantage, as 17.bxc4 (17.♞xc4? ♟xf3+ 18.gxf3 ♞xf3!−) 17...♞h4+ 18.♟f1 (18.♟d1 ♜xe4 △ 19.fxe4 ♞g4+−) 18...♜xe4 △ 19.fxe4 ♞f4+ 20.♟e1 ♞xe4+ 21.♟d1 ♞g4+ wins.

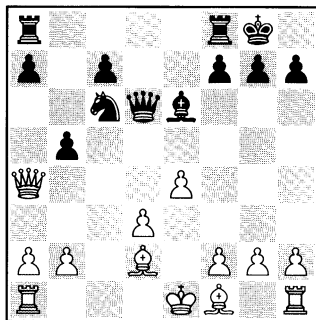
10...♞d5

Another active move hindering White's natural development. White's next chases the queen from its excellent position but accepts a gaping hole on d4.

11.e4

This is certainly not forced, but it is quite understandable. White needs to solve his main problem of developing his kingside forces and castling as soon as possible. Black's play is easier in a practical game. He will centralize his rooks along the e and d-files and move his knight into the centre. The square d4 will usually draw the knight like a magnet.

11...♞d6 12.d3 ♟c6 13.♙d2 b5!



14.♞d1

Considering how the game develops, White should perhaps have taken on b5 here. Let us investigate: 14. ♖xb5 ♖ab8 15. ♖a4 ♖xb2 16. ♙c3 ♖xf2!? 17. ♗xf2 ♖c5+ 18. d4 ♖xc3 19. ♗d1 f5! 20. e5 and now:

– 20... ♗b4 planning f4, e.g. 21. ♖b5 (21. ♙e2 f4) 21... f4 22. ♖e2 c5 23. ♖d2 ♖e3+ 24. ♖xe3 fxe3+ 25. ♗xe3 cxd4+ 26. ♖xd4 (26. ♗e4 g5!; 26. ♗d2!? ♖f2+ 27. ♗e1 ♖xa2 28. ♗d2 ♖a5 29. ♗f2±) 26... ♗c2+ 27. ♗d3 ♗xd4 28. ♗xd4 with equality.

– 20... f4! 21. ♗d3 ♖b2+ 22. ♙e2 ♗b4, when White must return the exchange.

14...f5

Lasker energetically opens files against the uncastled white king.

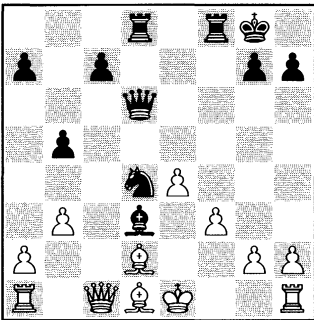
15. ♙e2 fxe4 16. dxe4 ♖ad8

Black has fully mobilized his forces and prevents White from castling. With his next few moves he pursues the same goal. Black is clearly better. Taking into consideration that our main focus lies with the opening phase let us continue with some light comments.

17. ♖c1 ♗d4 18. ♙d1 ♙c4 19. b3 ♙d3

Emphasizing the complete success of Black's strategy. White is almost immobilized, while his harvest of one meagre pawn can be recaptured at any time.

20.f3



20... ♖g6!

As Lasker indicates in his notes, this is even stronger than 20... ♙xe4! 21.0-0!, when his

majesty has escaped. Not, however, 21. fxe4? ♖f6 22. ♙e3 (22. ♙f4 ♖xf4 23. ♖xf4 ♖xf4, and Black has retrieved his investment with interest) 22... ♖h4+ 23. g3 ♖xe4 24. ♖f1 ♖xf1+ 25. ♗xf1 ♖h1+ winning.

21. ♗f2 ♖xe4

Superior is 21... ♙xe4! 22. ♖e1 ♗xf3 23. ♙xf3 (23. gxf3 ♖d6 24. ♖xe4 ♖xh2+ 25. ♗e1 ♖g3+ 26. ♗f1 ♖xf3+ 27. ♙xf3 ♖xf3+ 28. ♗g1 ♖xe4—+) 23... ♙xf3 24. gxf3 ♖d6 and wins, Lasker.

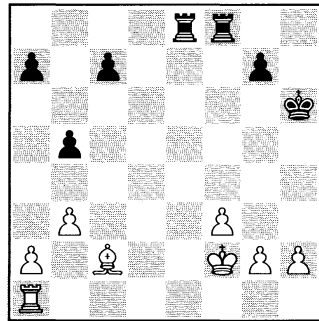
22. ♙g5 ♖de8 23. ♖e3 ♖f5!!

The exclams are Lasker's.

24. ♖xd4 ♖xg5 25. ♖xd3 ♖c5+! 26. ♗f1 ♖e5 27. ♗f2 ♖c5+ 28. ♗f1 ♖e5 29. ♗f2 ♖xa1 30. ♖xh7+!

The wily Kevitz goes for the best practical chance.

30... ♖xh7 31. ♙c2+ ♗h6 32. ♖xa1



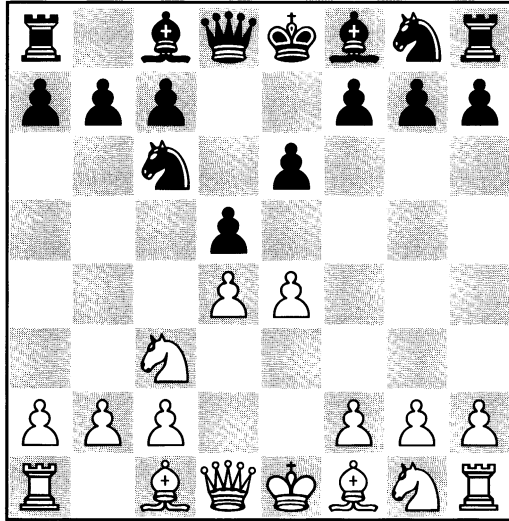
White has escaped into an ending where he has one pawn for the lost exchange. He is still lost because of Black's queenside majority, which will enable Black create a passed pawn.

Since this is not a book on endgame technique we will mercifully gloss over the rest. Suffice to say that Edward Lasker managed to lose from this position! For this tragic fact he duly praised his opponent's handling of the endgame (while castigating his own play). Kevitz-Ed. Lasker, New York, 1931.

CHAPTER 13

Karel van der Weide

A French Nimzowitsch



A Little Weird: 3...♞c6

Although 3...♞c6 may look a little weird, some strong (grand)masters have made it into a respectable line. I would like to mention Eduardas Rozentalis, Josef Klinger, Lüdger Keitlinghaus and Matthias Thesing. Occasionally it was used by world-class players like Veselin Topalov and Viktor Kortchnoi.

By playing this system, which can also occur from a real Nimzowitsch (1.e4 ♘c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 e6), Black restricts his options. The c-pawn becomes immobile and it is difficult to develop the bishop on c8. Moreover, Black looks up to a spatial problem. On the other hand, the Black position is without weaknesses. I would like to present six ga-

mes to you in which White used different methods to tackle this system.

Game 1

□ **Bart Michiels**
 ■ **Karel van der Weide**
 Groningen 2001

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.e5

With this move White tries to smother his opponent immediately.

4...f6

Black immediately attacks the pawn chain at the front. White keeps control over the e5 square with:

5. ♖b5

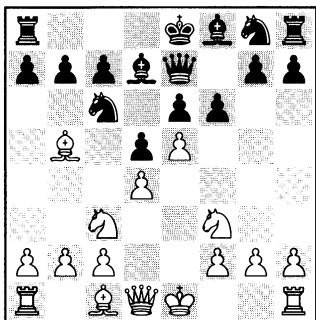
Consistent. The alternatives are inferior:

● 5. exf6?! is contradictory to White's former strategy: 5... ♖xf6 6. ♖f3 (after 6. ♖f4 ♖d6 7. ♖xd6 cxd6 8. g3 e5 Black seized the centre in Z. Polgar-Topalov, Singapore 1990) 6... ♖d6 7. ♖b5 (7. ♖g5 0-0 8. ♖d3 ♖e8 9. ♖e2 ♖h5 10. h4 e5 11. dxe5 ♖xe5 12. ♖xe5 ♖xe2+ 13. ♖xe2 ♖xe5 definitely wasn't worse for Black, Gunnarsson-Keitlinghaus, Reykjavik 1997) 7... 0-0 8. 0-0 ♖d7 9. ♖e1 ♖e8 10. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 11. ♖e5 ♖xe5 12. ♖xe5 ♖f7 13. f3 ♖ae8 and a draw was agreed in Spassky-Keitlinghaus, Germany 1988.

● 5. ♖f3 gives Black a choice between quiet development with 5... ♖d7 or the wild 5... fxe5 6. dxe5 ♖h6 7. ♖g5 ♖d7 8. ♖xh6 gxh6 9. ♖b5 ♖g7 10. 0-0 ♖d7 11. ♖e1 0-0-0, Paneque-Arencibia, Bayamo 1990.

5... ♖d7 6. ♖f3

The enterprising 6. ♖g4 was played in Drexel-Van der Weide, Liechtenstein 1997, after 6... ♖e7 7. ♖f3 ♖f7 8. ♖d2 0-0-0 9. 0-0-0 ♖ge7 10. ♖he1 ♖f5 11. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 12. ♖h3 ♖d7 13. g4 ♖e7 14. g5 fxg5 15. ♖xg5 ♖g8 16. f4 h6 17. ♖f3 ♖f5 Black was OK.

6... ♖e7

In these ♖c6-lines, Black regularly aims for castling queenside. The black king is quite safe there, because the tension is on the other

side of the board. 6... ♖b4 is a decent alternative for those of you who are afraid the bishop will never be developed. Rolf Schwarz gave 7. ♖xc6 ♖xc6 8. 0-0 ♖d7 9. ♖e2 0-0-0 10. c3 with a slight advantage for White.

7. 0-0 ♖f7 8. ♖e1

Instead of the text, 8. a3!? is a further attempt to suffocate Black, 8... 0-0-0 9. b4 ♖ge7 10. ♖d3 was Nijboer-van der Weide, Rotterdam 1997. Here Black definitely should have played 10... fxe5 11. dxe5 h6 with some counterplay.

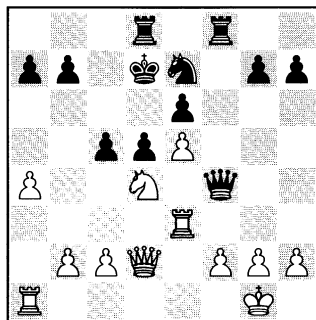
The game Maus-Keitlinghaus, Germany 1992, shows a similar position. Instead of 10. ♖d3, White played 10. ♖e1. Black got severely punished when he decided not to fix e5: 10... h6 11. ♖d3 g5 12. exf6 ♖xf6 13. ♖a4.

8... 0-0-0 9. a4

Here 9. ♖e2 ♖ge7 10. exf6 gxf6 11. ♖f4 leads to a complicated fight for the e5-square. After ♖g6/♖e8 or ♖g7 things are unclear.

9... ♖b4 10. ♖d2 ♖ge7 11. ♖e2 ♖xd2 12. ♖xd2 fxe5 13. dxe5 ♖hf8 14. ♖ed4 ♖f4 15. ♖e3 ♖xd4 16. ♖xd4 c5 17. ♖xd7+ ♖xd7

White cannot profit from the curious position of Black's king.

**18. ♖b5 ♖c6 19. ♖e2 ♖c8**

Followed by ♖b8 gives Black a slight advantage due to his nice centre.

Game 2

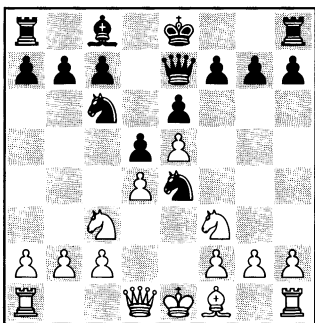
□ Paul Keres
 ■ Anatoly Lein

Baku 1961

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♗f3 ♗f6
 5.♙g5 ♙e7 6.e5

This is how Bronstein and Keres handled the ♘c6 system. There is always some logic in exchanging your bad bishop.

6...♗e4 7.♙xe7 ♚xe7



8.♙d3

8.a3?! ♘xc3! (8...♙d7 gives White the opportunity to prevent the destruction of his pawn-structure by playing 9.♚d3) 9.bxc3 ♙d7 10.♙d3 ♗a5 11.0-0 c5 12.a4?! ♚c8 (Black's play is very easy here. Just aim for the weak c4-spot) 13.h4 cxd4 (13...0-0?? 14.♙xh7+) 14.cxd4 ♘c4 15.♚c1 h6 16.g3 0-0 17.♗d2 f5 18.f4 (after the alternatives, Black seizes the initiative: 18.exf6 ♚xf6 19.c3 e5, and 18.♗xc4 dxc4 19.♙e2 f4) 18...♚fd8 should have given Black a plus in Czap-van der Weide, Bad Wiessee 2004, because after 19.♗xc4 dxc4 20.♙e2 c3 the white pawn on d4 is a sitting duck.

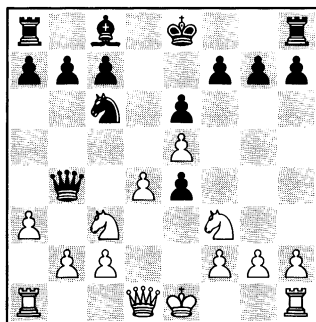
8...♚b4

It is quite interesting to play 8...♘xc3 anyway, despite the fact that White did not commit himself to a3. The extra tempo will not benefit White that much.

9.♙xe4

White has some compensation for the pawn after 9.0-0 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 ♚xc3 11.♚b1 ♚a3, but I doubt whether it is enough.

9...dxe4 10.a3



A nice *zwischenzug* which emphasizes White's main idea. The position opens up while the problematic French bishop on c8 has still not been developed.

10...♚xb2 11.♗xe4 ♚b5

The immediate retreat is best. The queen should not hang around too long: 11...b6?! 12.0-0 ♙a6 13.♚b1 ♚a2 14.♚b3 was already lost for Black in Hazai-Kekki, Espoo 1988.

12.♗ed2 ♗a5

Stronger than 12...0-0 13.c4 ♚b2 14.♚b1 ♚xa3 15.0-0 ♚d8 16.♗e4 b6 17.♗fg5 ♚e7 18.♚h5 h6 19.♗f6+, which gave White a ferocious attack in Bronstein-Zamicki, Buenos Aires 1988.

13.c4 ♚d7 14.0-0 b6 15.♚c1 ♙b7

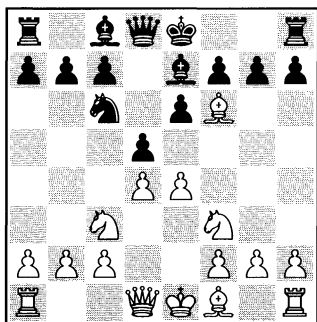
Black's position is acceptable.

Game 3

□ Petr Zvara
 ■ Lüdger Keitlinghaus

Prague 1991

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘c6 4.♗f3 ♗f6
 5.♙g5 ♙e7 6.♙xf6



This is possibly too ambitious. White intends to combine the motifs we saw in Games 1 and 2. White gets rid of his bad bishop, and also wants to smother his opponent.

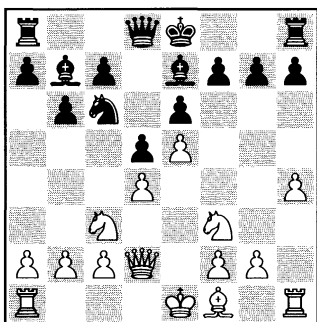
6...♗xf6 7.e5

After 7.♗b5 Black has a lot of ways to achieve counterplay. One way I really like is 7...0-0-0 ♖b8! 9.♞e1 c5! 10.exd5 exd5 11.dxc5 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♞a5, as played by both Josef Klingner and Claude Landenberg.

7...♗e7 8.h4 b6

On the kingside the black king is an easy target, so the castling-choice is limited.

9.♞d2 ♗b7



10.♞f4

Play in the game Jonkman-Van der Weide, The Hague 2001, developed along almost identical lines: 10.0-0-0 ♞d7 11.♞h3 0-0-0

12.♖g5 ♞df8 13.f4 f6 14.exf6 gxf6 15.♖f3 ♞hg8 16.♞e1 ♞e8 17.h5 ♖b8 18.♖d1 ♗d6 19.♗b5 ♞g4 20.g3 ♞eg8 21.♞e3 a6 22.♗xc6 ♞xc6 23.♖h2 ♞4g7 24.g4 ♞e7 25.♖b1 e5 and Black got the position of his dreams.

10...h6 11.0-0-0 ♞d7 12.♞h3 ♕f8!

This subtle retreat secures the evacuation of the black king.

13.♖h2 0-0-0 14.h5 f6 15.exf6 ♗d6 16.♞d2 gxf6

Because of the bishop-pair and his central domination Black should be better.

Game 4

□ Jan Timman

■ Matthias Thesing

Hengelo 2000

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♖c6 4.♖f3 ♖f6 5.e5 ♖e4 6.♖e2

In this line White hopes to prove that the black knight on e4 is badly situated. The variations involved show little analogy with other ♖c6-lines.

6...f6 7.♖g3

The alternative 7.exf6 ♞xf6 8.♖g3 e5 can lead to enormous complications. How about these two games:

● 9.dxe5 ♖xe5 10.♞xd5 ♗b4+ 11.c3 ♖xf3+ 12.gxf3 ♖xc3 13.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 14.♗d2 ♗xa1 15.♗b5+ c6 16.0-0 ♗e6 17.♗xc6+ ♖f7 18.♖e4, Luther-Keitlinghaus, Germany Bundesliga 1990/91.

● 9.♗b5 exd4 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.c4 dxc3 12.♞xd5 0-0-0 13.♖xe4 cxb2, Hellers-Klinger, Gausdal 1986.

In both cases the resulting position is a mess.

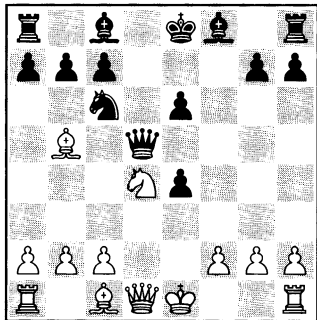
7...fxe5 8.♗b5

Recapturing with 8.dxe5 is fine for Black after 8...♗d7 9.♗d3 ♖c5 10.♖h5 ♖xd3+ 11.♞xd3 ♞e7, Hector-Rozentalis, Malmö 1993.

8...exd4

In order to avoid drawish lines, I once took a glance at 8...♘b4+ 9.c3 (9.♙f1 exd4) 9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♘xc3+ 11.♙d2 ♘xa1 12.♚xa1 e4 13.♗e5 ♙d7. Giving it a second thought, I saw Black was completely tight up after ♘xc6 and ♘b4. Back to the drawing board!

9.♗xe4 dxe4 10.♗xd4 ♚d5

**11.♗xc6**

Stronger than 11.c4?! ♘b4+ 12.♙f1 ♚d6 13.♙e3 ♙d7 14.♚a4 e5 15.♙xc6 bxc6 16.♗e2 c5 and Black was a little better, Hector-Rozentalis, Malmö 1997.

Now Thesing played

11...♚xd1? 12.♗xd1 a6 13.♙a4 ♙d7 14.♚e1 ♙xc6 15.♙xc6+ bxc6 16.♚xe4

which gave White a clear advantage.

Therefore I think it is better to play:

11...a6 12.♚xd5 exd5 13.♗b4+ axb5 14.♗xd5 ♙d6 15.♗c3 ♘b4

With equality.

Game 5

□ Janis Klovangs

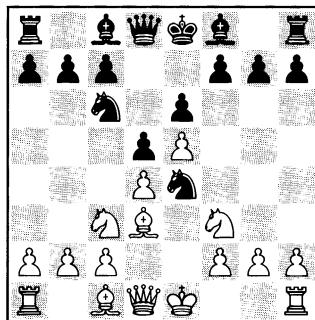
■ Alexander Riazantsev

Biel 2000

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗c6 4.♗f3 ♗f6 5.e5

Here 5.♙d3 ♘b4 transposes after 6.e5, but a separate line is 6.♙g5 dxe4 7.♙xe4 h6 8.♙xf6 ♚xf6 where Black at least has his dark-coloured bishop to count on. I should mention that both Rozentalis and Agdestein have played 5...♗b4 after 5.♙d3, so that is allowed too.

5...♗e4 6.♙d3



This is quite often played against ♗c6, so maybe it is fair to call this the main line.

6...♘b4 7.♙d2

Instead 7.0-0 is an interesting pawn sacrifice, although it should not worry Black much: 7...♗xc3 8.bxc3 ♘xc3 9.♚b1 h6. A common reply in order to prevent ♗g5. Actually, the game Koch-Prié, Paris 1989, has demonstrated that preventing the knight sortie is not obligatory: 9...♘b4 10.♗g5 ♙e7 11.♗xh7 (11.♚h5 g6 12.♚g4 ♗b4) 11...g6 12.♗f6+ ♙xf6 13.exf6 ♚xf6 and a pawn is still a pawn. Still, 9...h6 is also sufficient. Several games have shown that White has not enough compensation after 10.♙a3 a5 11.♙b5 ♙d7 12.♚d3 ♘b4.

7...♗xd2 8.♚xd2

Here Black has a choice, depending on his intentions. I will consider the solid 8...♙d7 first. We will examine the sharp 8...f6 in game 6 (Shirov-Rozentalis).

8...♙d7 9.a3 ♙xc3

Of course, it was still possible to keep the

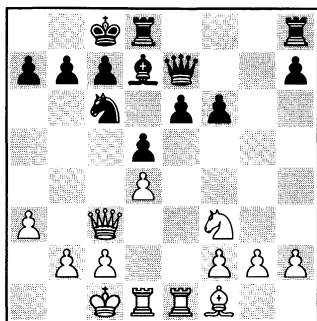
bishop on the board with ♖f8 or ♖e7. A line that was played several times by Firman goes 9...♖e7 10.0-0 g5!?. Well, why not?

10.♖xc3 f6 11.exf6

Otherwise Black will take on e5. Now there are some weaknesses for White to attack.

11...gxh6 12.0-0 ♖e7 13.♞he1 0-0-0

14.♖b5 ♖b8 15.♖f1 ♖c6



16.g3

Black should be able to hold after moves like ♖d6 or ♞de8. By the way, 16.♖b5 can lead to a repetition of moves.

Game 6

□ Alexey Shirov

■ Eduardas Rozentalis

Tilburg 1993

**1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♖c6 4.♖f3 ♖f6
5.e5 ♖e4 6.♖d3 ♖b4 7.♖d2 ♖xd2
8.♖xd2 f6**

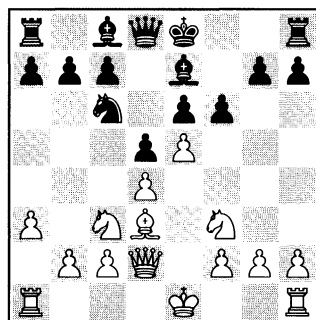
When played with the intention of keeping the dark-squared bishop this is a much sharper attempt than 8...♖d7 as in Game 5.

9.a3

Both 9.exf6 ♖xf6 and 9.♖b5 ♖d7 10.♖xc6 ♖xc6 are harmless.

9...♖e7

This is the most natural move. Still, two other bishop moves come into consideration.



How about the 'weird' 9...♖f8!?. In that case the pieces do not obstruct each other. E.g. 10.0-0 ♖d7 11.♞ae1 fxe5 12.♖xe5 ♖xe5 13.♞xe5 ♖d6 14.♞h5 ♖f6 and Black should be fine, De Vilder-Van der Weide, Amsterdam 1997.

Exchanging the bishop with 9...♖xc3 10.♖xc3 ♖d7 would transpose to game 5, but it is interesting to take on e5 instead of 10...♖d7: 10...fxe5 11.dxe5 ♖d7 (Rozentalis once castled here) 12.♖c5?! ♖e7 13.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 was Ott-Keitlinghaus, Germany 1989. It would appear that Black is better prepared for the ending.

10.exf6

After 10.♖e2 fxe5 11.dxe5 0-0 12.h4 Black has 12...♞xf3 13.gxf3 ♖xe5 which is a very interesting exchange sacrifice that was played twice by Rozentalis. In Yearbook 20 he comments on his game against Kuzmin, Leningrad 1990. Rozentalis considers 14.0-0-0 ♖f8 15.f4 ♖xd3+ 16.♖xd3 ♖d7 to be equal.

His game with Chandler, Germany 1992, on the other hand, went 10.h4 fxe5 11.dxe5 0-0 12.♖e2 ♖e8 13.0-0 ♖h5 14.♞de1 ♖d7 15.♞h3 ♞f4 16.♖b1 ♞af8 and Black was well mobilized.

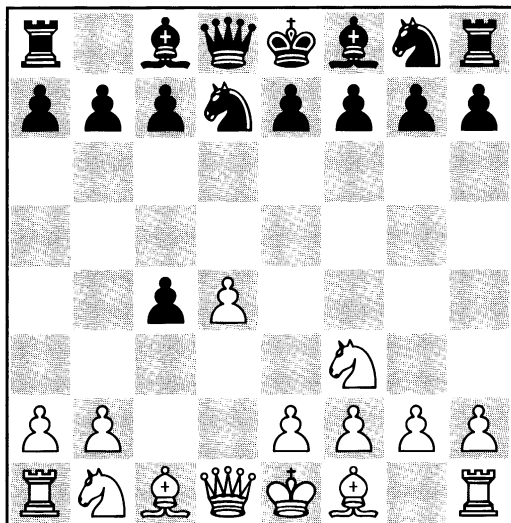
**10...♖xf6 11.♖b5 0-0 12.♖xc6 bxc6
13.0-0 c5 14.dxc5 c6 15.♞fe1 ♞e8
16.♖e5 d4 17.♖a2 a5**

The position is unclear.

CHAPTER 14

Glenn Flear

Protecting the Gambit Pawn in the QQA



Play 3...♘d7!?

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3

In this standard position imagine your opponent's emotions when you play

3...♘d7!?

He is already out of his theory on move 3! You intend to follow-up with ...♘b6 to protect the extra pawn and there's no obvious continuation for him. I suspect that he'll already feel a shade uncomfortable! Let's have a look at some variations and see if you agree with me that the idea holds water, with White's best chance for an edge probably being 4.e4 and 5.♙xc4. The main proponent of this line has been the Russian Dmitry Godes who over the years has tried it both over the board and in correspondence chess.

4.e4

– Instead 4.e3 is not very testing: 4...♘b6 5.♘bd2 (5.♙xc4 makes less sense here as White will realistically have to lose a tempo with e3-e4 to get his bishop out) 5...♙e6! (not the only, but perhaps the most provocative plan for Black) 6.♘g5 (6.♘e5 ♘f6 7.f3 Farago-Kovacevic, Sarajevo 1983, and now 7...g6!) 6...♙d5 7.e4 e6 8.exd5 ♖xg5 9.dxe6 0-0-0 10.exf7 ♘h6 with great play for Black who leads in development, Nikolac-Kovacevic, Yugoslavia 1974.

– 4.♘c3 ♘b6 5.♘e5! is interesting. 5...g6 (I'm not sure that White would feel that comfortable after 5...♙e6! 6.e4 c6 7.♙e3 ♘f6 with some practical compensation for White

but nothing concrete) 6.♖xc4 (6.e4 ♕g7 7.♗e3 ♖f6 8.f3 0-0 9.♗xc4 is analogous to a number of positions from the notes of Gavrikov-Gulko, (except that here a2-a4, a7-a5 haven't been played). Black has a Grünfeld set-up where White has a pull due to his good hold on the centre) 6...♗g7 7.♗xb6 axb6 8.♗f4 c6 9.e3 ♖f6 10.♗e5 0-0 11.♗e2 b5 12.a4! and White has the tiniest of edges, Mishuchkov-Godes, Soviet Union 1981.

– After 4.♗a3 Black can of course continue with ...♗b6 but Godes has shown a preference for playing as in a more traditional QGA aiming for an early ...c5 e.g. 4...♗f6 5.♗xc4 e6 6.e3 ♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 c5 9.♖e2 b5 10.♗ce5 c4 11.♗c2 ♗b7 12.♞d1 ♖c7 13.♗xd7 ♗xd7 14.e4 e5 Mikhalevski-Godes, Tel Aviv rapid 1996.

– 4.♖a4 aims to transpose back to familiar territory. 4...c6 (4...♗f6 transposes to the line 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♖a4+ ♗bd7 which is considered to be less likely to equalize than 4...c6 5.♖xc4 ♗f5. After 5.♗c3 e6 6.e4 ECO prefers White after both principal moves 6...a6 and 6...c5) 5.♖xc4 e5!? 6.dxe5 ♗xe5 7.♗xe5 ♖a5+ as in Efimov-Godes should be OK for Black.

4...♗b6 5.♗xc4

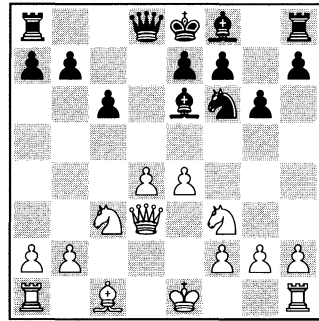
Alternatives are discussed in the notes to Gavrikov-Gulko.

5...♗xc4 6.♖a4+ c6 7.♖xc4 ♗f6 8.♗c3 ♗e6

The risky 8...b5 is featured in Bönsch-Godes. I think White should take up the gauntlet with 9.♖xc6+!

9.♖d3 g6

As in Sapundzhiev-Godes, see below. The position can be considered as a type of Grünfeld where White has been able to build his centre. The exchange of one pair of minor pieces should ease Black's defence, who is only slightly cramped here. Having the bishop pair may become a factor later, but at the moment it's not that significant.



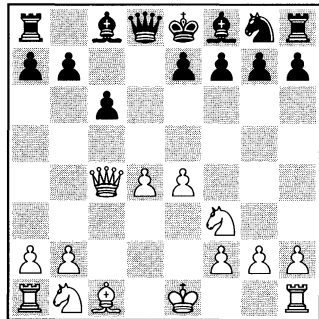
If you don't mind this sort of position then 3...♗d7 could be for you. In any case one thing is clear: If you like 3...♗d7 you'll have Godes on your side!

□ Georgy Sapundzhiev

■ Dmitry Godes

Markov mem corr 1987

1.♗f3 d5 2.d4 ♗d7!? 3.c4 dxc4 4.e4 ♗b6 5.♗xc4 ♗xc4 6.♖a4+ c6 7.♖xc4



Black has scored badly from this position which can be considered as the main line. Let's see what he can do.

7...♗f6 8.♗c3 ♗e6

For 8...b5 see Bönsch-Godes.

9.♖d3 g6 10.0-0 ♗g7 11.h3 0-0 12.♗e3

It's reminiscent of a number of lines from the Grünfeld. Black is solid but lacks counterplay, so White with a well consolidated centre keeps something out of the opening despite Black having the bishops.

12...♟e8!? **13.♞g5 ♖d7 14.♞xe6 ♖xe6 15.d5**

15.f4 is well met by 15...f5! e.g. 16.e5 ♞c7 17.♞a4 b6! and Black has a nice light-squared blockade.

15...cxd5 16.♞xd5 b6 17.♖a3

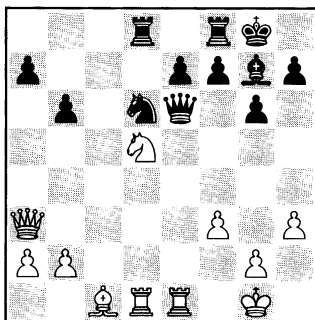
Strongest is 17...♟g5! when Black has to play precisely: 17...♟xb2 (17...f6 seems playable but a shade passive e.g. 18.♟f4 ♞d8 19.♞fd1 ♞d7 20.♞ac1 ♖f7) 18.♟xe7 (18.♞ab1 ♟f6 19.♟xf6 ♞xf6 20.♞c7 ♖xe4 leaves Black with enough compensation for the exchange) 18...♟xa1 19.♞xa1 ♞g7 20.♟xf8 ♞xf8 21.♞e1 f5! and Black seems to be OK.

17...♖xe4 18.♞ad1?

White should simply regain his pawn as after 18.♞xe7+ ♟h8 19.♞fe1 ♖b7?! White has the rather strong continuation (Black should instead settle for 19...♞f6 20.♟h6 ♖h4 21.♟xg7+ ♟xg7 when White only has a nominal pull) 20.♟d4! ♞f6 21.♖c3.

18...♞d6 19.f3 ♖e6 20.♟c1 ♞ad8 21.♞fe1

After 21.♖xa7 ♞f5 Black has good chances due to White's weakened kingside.



21...♟d4+! **22.♟e3 ♖xd5 23.♞xd4 ♖b7 24.♞ed1 ♞c8**

Black has more or less consolidated the extra pawn. There are some technical difficulties due to the bishop having an influence on both wings, but Godes gets there in the end.

25.♖d3 b5 26.♟f2 a6 27.b3 ♖c6 28.♖e2 ♞f5 29.♞d3 ♖f6 30.a4 b4!?

Another try is 30...bxa4 31. bxa4 ♞c6.

31.a5 ♞c3 32.♟e1 ♞xd3 33.♖xd3 ♞b8 34.♖e4 ♞d6 35.♖d4 ♖e6 36.♖a7 ♞b5 37.♟f2?

The best chance is 37.♖xa6!, after 37...♖e2 38.♞a1 ♖e5 (or 38...♖b2 39.♞d1 ♞g5 40.♟f2 ♖xb3) 39.♞d1 ♞xa5 Black is always better but still a long way from the full point.

37...♖xb3 38.♞e1 e5 39.♖xa6 ♖d5 40.♖a7 b3 41.♖c7 b2 42.♖d8+ ♟g7 43.♟h4 ♖d4+ 44.♟f1 ♞e4!

Simplifying to victory.

45.♖xd4 exd4 46.fxe4 b1♖ 47.♞xb1 ♞xb1+ 48.♟e2 ♞a1 49.♟d8 ♞a3 50.♟b6 f6 **0-1**

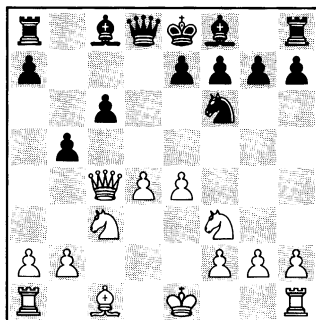
□ Uwe Bönsch

■ Dmitry Godes

Herzliya 1993

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♞f3 ♞d7 4.e4 ♞b6 5.♟xc4 ♞xc4 6.♖a4+ c6 7.♖xc4 ♞f6 8.♞c3 b5?!

Optimistic!



9.♖e2

A positional approach that isn't the best. In my opinion White can grab the pawn: 9.♖xc6+! ♔d7 10.♗b7 (Petursson considers White to be clearly better after 10.♗c5 e6 11.♗e5 b4 12.♘d5!) 10...♞b8 11.♗xa7 ♚a8 (after 11...b4 12.♘e2 ♘xe4 Black is still a pawn down and will need time to complete development) 12.♗c5 e6 13.♗e5 ♗a5 14.0-0 b4 15.♘d5 ♘xd5 16.exd5 f6!? (or 16...♗xd5 17.♗xd5 exd5 18.♞e1+ ♘d8 with an inferior ending) Zharkov-Godes, Riazan 1986, and Black is worse as he lacks compensation. So I can't believe in 8...b5 and prefer the solid 8...♙e6.

9...b4!?

Pushing the knight away in order to get play on the a6-f1 diagonal.

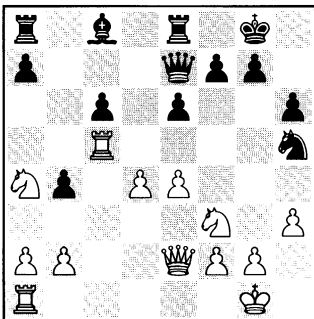
10.♘a4 e6?!

Too slow. Instead 10...♗a5! 11.b3 (11.♘c5 e6 to get the light-squared bishop on the a6-f1 diagonal. 12.♘d2 ♙xc5 13.♘b3 ♗d8 14.dxc5 a5 with ...♙a6 in the air) 11...♗b5 (or 11...♙a6 12.♗c2 ♘d7!?) 12.♗c2 ♘d7 13.♙b2 e6 14.0-0 ♙e7 15.♘b1 0-0 which wasn't at all clear in Miles-Bellon Lopez, Montilla 1978.

11.0-0 ♙e7 12.♙g5 0-0 13.♞fc1 h6 14.♙h4

White shouldn't be in a hurry to take the c-pawn as after 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.♞xc6? he gets into hot water following 15...♙d7.

14...♞e8 15.h3 ♘h5 16.♙xe7 ♗xe7 17.♞c5



A strong positional player like Bönsch is unimpressed by his opponent's antics. His strong bind forces Black to play eccentrically to try and free his position. Afterwards he avoids the temptation to grab a pawn which would free Black's game.

17...f5!? 18.exf5 ♘f4 19.♗c4 ♗f7 20.♞e5 ♞f8 21.♞ae1 exf5 22.♗xf7+ ♘xf7 23.♞e7+ ♔g8 24.♘c5

Black's weaknesses won't run away.

24...a5 25.♞c7 ♘d5 26.♞xc6

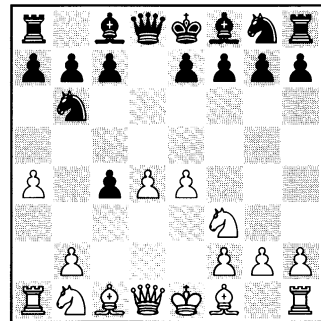
Finally! The rest is even more one-sided. Black resigned on move 41.

□ Viktor Gavrikov

■ Boris Gulko

Frunze ch-USSR 1981

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘f3 ♘d7 4.e4 ♘b6 5.a4



Forcing 5...a5, which is a sensible inclusion from White's point of view. Practice has also seen:

- 5.♘e5 g6! 6.♘a3 ♘f6 7.f3 ♙g7 8.♘axc4 0-0 9.♙e3 ♘fd7 10.♘xd7 ♙xd7 11.♘a5 ♞b8 12.♙e2 c5 was fine for Black in Akopov-Godes, corr. 1986.

- 5.h3?! is tantamount to a loss of tempo. After 5...♘f6 6.♘c3 e6 7.♙xc4 ♘xc4 8.♗a4+ c6 9.♗xc4 b5! (here this works!) 10.♗xc6+ ♙d7 11.♗a6 b4 12.♘b5 ♗b8

Black was better in Zilberman-Godes, Chelyabinsk 1975.

– 5.♘c3 (this transposed from 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♘c3 ♘d7 4.e4 ♘b6 5.♘f3) 5...♙g4 6.♙e3 ♙xf3 7.♚xf3 e6 8.♚d1 c6 9.♙e2 ♙d6 10.0-0 ♘e7, Sadler-Vladimirov, Hastings 1990/91, with a murky game in prospect where White has some compensation for the pawn (bishop pair, centre, space etc).

5...a5 6.♘e5 ♘f6

A move order worth noting is 6...g6! with the point being that after 7.♘xc4 ♘xc4 8.♙xc4 ♙g7 Black gains a tempo against d4. 9.♙e3 ♘f6 10.f3 0-0 11.♘c3 probably yields White a small edge.

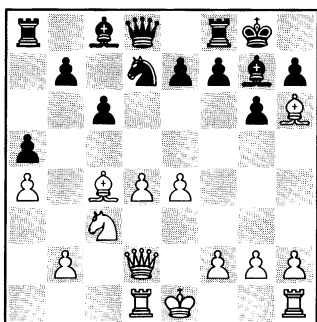
7.♘c3 ♘fd7 8.♙xc4 g6 9.♙f4

Otherwise White has tried 9.♙e3, e.g. 9...♙g7 10.♚d2 0-0 11.♙e2 c6 12.0-0 ♘xc4 13.♙xc4 ♘b6 14.♙b3 ♚d6 15.♚d3 ♙e6 16.♙xe6 ♚xe6 17.d5 cxd5 18.exd5 ♚d6 Yrjölä-Koskinen, Tampere 1991, when Black has equal chances.

9...c6 10.♚d2 ♙g7

Another move order 10...♘xc4 11.♙xc4 ♘b6 12.♙a2 ♙g7 13.♚d1 0-0 slows down the white attack but on the other hand Black is unable to access d6 with his queen as in the game.

11.♙h6 0-0 12.♚d1 ♘xc4 13.♙xc4



13...♘b6

13...♙xh6 14.♚xh6 ♚b6 is given as unclear by Gavrikov and Slekis.

14.♙a2 ♚d6 15.h4 ♙e6 16.♙xe6 fxe6?

Opening the f-file at the cost of chronically weakening his pawns. Gavrikov suggests the more circumspect 16...♚xe6 e.g. 17.♙xg7 (instead 17.h5 ♘c4 18.♚c1 ♙xh6 19.♚xh6 ♘xb2 20.♚d2 ♘c4 21.♚d3 g5! 22.♚xg5+ ♘h8 isn't clear) 17...♙xg7 18.h5 f5!? leads to complications where White is probably a slight favourite.

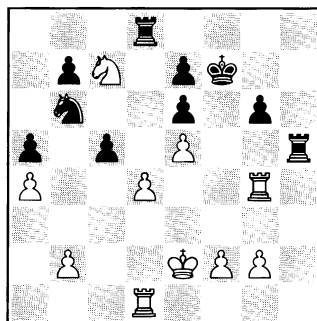
17.♙xg7 ♙xg7 18.h5 ♚f4 19.♚xf4 ♚xf4 20.hxg6 hxg6 21.♙e2

White's pleasant endgame edge is largely due to his superior structure.

21...♚ff8 22.♚h4 ♚h8 23.♙g4 ♚ad8 24.e5 c5 25.♘b5 ♚h5?

25...♚d7 26.dxc5 ♚xd1 27.♘xd1 ♘d7 represents a better chance.

26.♘c7 ♙f7



27.♘xe6! ♙xe6 28.♚xg6+ ♙f7 29.♚xb6 ♚xd4 30.♚xd4 ♚xe5+ 31.♙d3 cxd4 32.♙b5

32.♚xb7 is perhaps simplest.
32...♚e1 33.♚xa5 e5 34.♚b5 ♙e6 35.♚xb7

The rook ending should be winning but still requires good technique.

35...♚d1+ 36.♙e2 ♚a1 37.♚b4 ♙d5 38.f3 ♚g1 39.♙f2 ♚c1 40.g4 ♚c2+ 41.♙e1 e4 42.fxe4+ ♙xe4 43.♚b8 ♙e3 44.♚e8+ ♙d3 45.a5 ♚xb2 46.g5 ♚b1+ 47.♙f2 ♚b7 48.g6 ♚g7 49.a6

♙c2 50.♙e1 ♘d3 51.♞h8 ♞a7 52.♞d8
♞g7 53.♙f2 ♙c2 54.a7! 1-0

□ Juraj Nikolac
■ Vlatko Kovacevic
Yugoslavia 1976

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♗f3 ♗d7 4.e3

No good is 4.♗bd2?! as it allows Black to take immediate control of events after e.g. 4...b5! 5.b3 c3 6.♗b1 b4 7.a3 c5 8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.♞c2 ♗e6 10.e3 a5 and Black was better in Borisenko-Dorfman, Chelyabinsk 1975.

4...♗b6 5.♗bd2

Here 5.♗xc4 gives White a poorer version of 4.e4 and 5.♗xc4. White will have to play e3-e4 anyway to get his bishop out.

5...♗e6!?

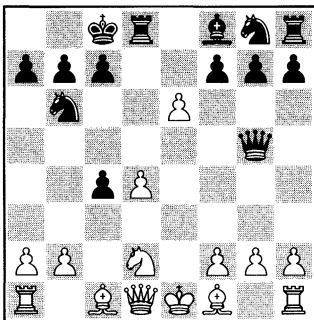
This seems perfectly sound here.

6.♗g5?!

White can try 6.♗e5 ♗f6 7.f3 as in Farago-Kovacevic, Sarajevo 1983, but after 7...g6! 8.♗dxc4 ♗g7 9.e4 0-0 10.♗e3 ♗fd7 Black has a reasonable game. Otherwise 6.♞c2 ♗f6 7.♗xc4 ♗xc4 8.♗xc4 ♗xc4 9.♞xc4 c6 10.0-0 e6 11.♗d2 ♞d5 was equal in Lukacs-Kovacevic, Tuzla 1981.

6...♗d5 7.e4 e6 8.exd5 ♞xg5 9.dxe6 0-0-0!

Rapid development is the main priority here.



10.exf7 ♗h6 11.♗f3

11.g3 is met by 11...♞e7+. I then prefer Black after 12.♗e2 ♞xd4 13.0-0 ♞xf7 14.♞c2, although Kovacevic feels that White has compensation.

11...♞g6 12.g3 ♗b4+ 13.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 14.♞xd2 ♞xf7 15.♗e2 c5 16.0-0 ♞he8

Material is equal but Black's forces are bearing down on White's centre in a menacing fashion.

17.a4

17.♞ad1 is well met by 17...♗f5.

17...cxd4 18.a5 d3 19.♗d1

Kovacevic points out that 19.axb6 is hopeless after 19...dxe2 20.bxa7 exf1♞+ 21.♙xf1 ♙c7 22.♞a5+ b6.

19...♗d5 20.a6 b5 21.♞a5 ♞d7

White is left thrashing about looking for tricks, but cannot save the game.

22.♗d2 ♗f5 23.♗g4 g6 24.♞fc1 ♙b8 25.b3 c3 26.♞xc3 ♗xc3 27.♞xc3 ♞c7 28.♞b4 ♗d4 29.♗f3 ♞b6 30.♞d2 ♗xb3 31.♞f4+ ♞c7 0-1

□ Igor Efimov
■ Dmitry Godes
Belgorod 1989

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♗f3 ♗d7 4.♞a4 c6

4...♗f6 is best avoided for two reasons:

1. It's too conventional (why are you reading an SOS-book anyway!) and
2. It's not that great for Black after 5.♗c3 e6 6.e4.

5.♞xc4 e5!

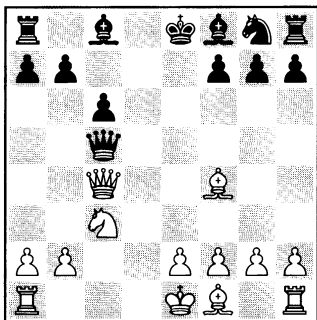
5...♗gf6 was played in Euwe-Alekhine, World Championship match Holland 1935.

This position could also occur from a Slav: 1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♞c2 dxc4 5.♞xc4 ♗bd7.

6.dxe5 ♗xe5 7.♗xe5 ♞a5+ 8.♗c3

Not 8.♞c3?? ♗b4.

8...♖xe5 9.♙f4 ♖c5



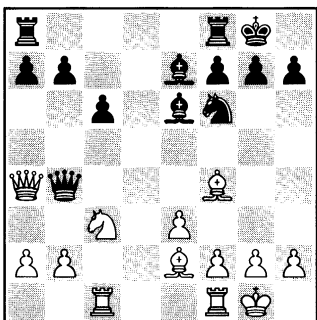
10.e3

10.e4 wasn't successful in Romsdal-Heim, Norwegian team championship 2001, as after 10...♙e6 11.♖xc5 ♙xc5 12.♙d3 0-0-0 13.♙d1 ♗e7 14.0-0 ♗g6 15.♙g3 ♙d7 Black had more than equalized.

10...♙e6 11.♖a4

In Shainswit-Adams, Ventnor City 1943, play was dead equal after 11.♖xc5 ♙xc5 12.0-0-0 ♗f6 13.a3 ♙b3 14.♙d2 0-0 15.♙d3 ♙fd8 16.♙c2.

11...♗f6 12.♙e2 ♙e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.♙ac1 ♖b4



Black has a fully satisfactory game. Efimov decides to keep the queens on in order to try and use his central pawns to generate an attack.

15.♖c2 ♙fd8 16.e4 ♙d7 17.♙d2?

A tactical error! Instead, 17.♙fd1 is about equal after 17...♙ad8 18.♙xd7 ♙xd7.

17...♖d6

Fritz would play 17...♙xa2! which looks slightly precarious but White cannot exploit Black's cheeky pawn grab, e.g. 18.♗d5 (18.♗xa2 ♖xd2) 18...♖b3 19.♗xe7+ ♙xe7 20.f3 ♖xc2 21.♙xc2 ♙e6 and Black is more or less a clear pawn to the good.

18.♙e3 ♗g4 19.♙xg4 ♙xg4 20.f4 ♙e6?!

Slightly risky as Black now loses control of the d-file. Safer is 20...♙dd8 with equality.

21.♙cd1 ♖b4 22.f5 ♙xd1 23.♙xd1 ♙c4 24.♙d7?

24.a3! ♖a5 25.♙d7 would favour White.

24...♙xa2!

Not missing the opportunity to grab the a-pawn this time around!

25.♖d2

25.♗xa2?? ♖e1 mate.

25...♙b3 26.e5 ♙f8 27.h3 a5 28.♖e2 ♙e8

Stronger is 28...a4! intending ...a3.

29.e6 fxe6?

It's still possible to play 29...a4!? with the idea of 30.♙xf7 a3.

30.f6 gxf6 31.♖h5 ♙e7 32.♙d4 ♙c4 33.♖h4?

White wins a piece with 33.♖g4+ ♙g7 34.♙xc4 ♙xg4 35.♙xg4+ ♖xg4 36.hxg4 but the ending isn't clear.

33...♖xb2

Or 33...b5 34.♖xf6 ♙g7.

34.♗e4?

Instead 34.♙xc4 ♙g7 35.♖e4 leaves Black with four pawns for the piece, but White has reasonable chances of holding his position together.

34...♙g7 35.♗xf6+ ♗h8 36.♗g4 h5??

36...♙d5 locks the white rook out of play and should win. The text is crazy!

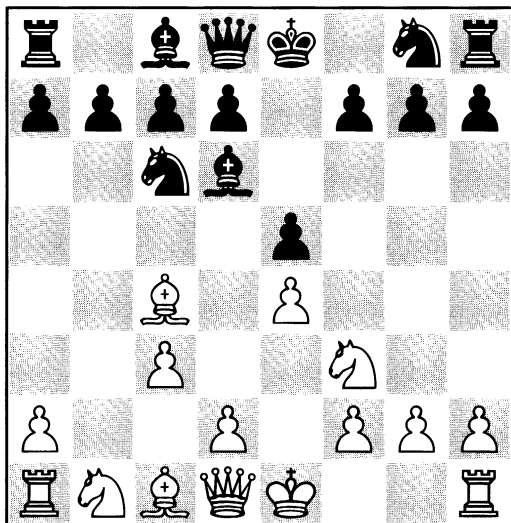
37.♙d8 ♖a3 38.♖f2 hxg4 39.♙xf8+

1-0

CHAPTER 15

Jeroen Bosch & Carlos Matamoros

Evans Gambit: 'Stoneware' Defence



5...♔d6!? – Old Wine in New Bottles

In the famous tournament of Hastings 1895 the young Harry Pillsbury emerged victorious after 21 rounds. This caused quite a sensation since all the top players of the time – Chigorin, Lasker, Tarrasch, and Steinitz – were among the participants. Pillsbury twice defended against the Evans Gambit with the odd-looking 5...♔d6. Interestingly, this old defence of the brilliant American has in recent times been taken up by several grandmasters including among others: Alexander Grischuk and Ivan Sokolov.

Let us examine the recent (and old) theory by means of the games Jobava-Grischuk and Short-Sokolov.

□ **Baadur Jobava**

■ **Alexander Grischuk**

Plovdiv Ech-tt 2003

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.b4

Here it is, the gambit devised by captain William Davies Evans around 1824. It became general practice after his 1827 win over Alexander McDonnell (one of the strongest players at the time). This game is generally considered the stem game of the Evans Gambit even though Evans himself used an inaccurate move order (4.0-0 d6 5.b4 Evans-McDonnell, London 1827). McDonnell, impressed by what the captain

had shown him, used it in his famous match against De la Bourdonnais. The Frenchman himself became equally willing to sac the b-pawn in their following match games. Anderssen, Chigorin and Morphy were other adherents of the Evans Gambit in the 19th century.

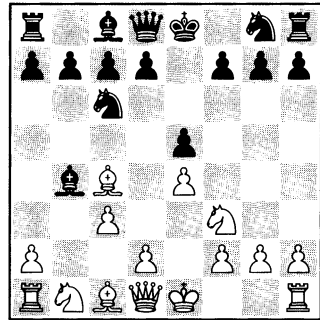
Eventually, however, the popularity of this romantic gambit waned. This was partly due to the efforts of the first and second world champion. In the case of Steinitz it is clear that the spirit of the impetuous 4.b4 went against all that he stood for in chess. However, his defensive methods were rather odd. Lasker – one of the greatest defenders in the history of chess – devised the standard defence accepted by the players of his day and modern theoreticians alike.

All was quiet on the Evans front until the mid-1990s, when none other than the 13th world champion Garry Kasparov played 4.b4 to annihilate both Anand and Piket. (It has to be said, though, that Fischer used the Evans in a few casual games – two of which made it into his *My Sixty Memorable Games!*) Kasparov’s efforts put the Evans Gambit back on the modern chess map. Nowadays, Short is the strongest grandmaster to play it more or less regularly. But you can expect to meet Captain Evans’ move on all levels.

4...♙xb4

Accepting the gambit pawn was once a question of honour. Nowadays all beginners grow up with the rule that the only way to refute a gambit is to accept. This SOS supports this view! Naturally, 4...♙b6 is playable. It was this move that Piket chose when Kasparov surprised him with 4.b4. After 4...♙b6 5.a4 a5 (5...a6 is considered better) 6.b5 ♘d4 7.♗xd4 ♙xd4 8.c3 ♙b6 9.d4 exd4 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♙g5 h6 12.♙xe7 ♖xe7 13.cxd4 White had a pleasant edge in Kasparov-Piket, Amsterdam 1995.

5.c3



5...♙d6!?

The bishop retreat to d6 naturally earns the SOS stamp of approval. Pillsbury, in his choice of 5...♙d6, was influenced by two American players (Stone and Ware) which is why 5...♙d6 was called the ‘Stoneware’ defence according to Blackburne. The avid SOS-reader will probably recognize this move from several earlier SOS-subjects featuring ♙d6. See also Chapter 2!

Before we examine the main idea of 5...♙d6, it is useful to give a brief overview of the ‘normal’ lines.

– 5...♙c5?! 6.d4 exd4 7.0-0 d6 8.cxd4 ♙b6 was once the main tabiya position of the Evans Gambit. Although playable, it is illogical to give White the tempi to build up his centre.

– 5...♙e7 6.d4 ♗a5 7.♙e2 (7.♗xe5) 7...exd4 (7...d6) 8.♖xd4 ♗f6 (there are stronger alternatives at this stage, such as 8...♗c6 9.♖xg7 ♙f6 10.♖g3 d6 or 8...d5) 9.e5 ♗c6 10.♖h4 ♗d5 11.♖g3 g6 (11...♗f8) 12.0-0 ♗b6 13.c4! d6 14.♗d1 ♗d7 15.♙h6!, with excellent compensation for White. Kasparov-Anand, Riga 1995.

– 5...♙a5 is the absolute main line. 6.d4 (6.0-0 d6 7.d4 ♙b6! was Lasker’s suggestion, which highlights the inaccuracy of 6.0-0) 6...d6 (6...exd4 7.0-0 ♗ge7! 8.♗g5 d5 9.exd5 ♗e5 is a modern recipe. Black is OK, as demonstrated by Short-Adams, Sarajevo

2000, and Morozevich-Adams, Wijk aan Zee 2001) 7. ♖b3 ♜d7 8.dxe5 ♙b6!; with this last move (similar to Lasker's 6... ♙b6 above) Black prepares ♘a5.

Looking at the 5th move alternatives, we see that White will always play 6.d4, creating an ideal pawn centre. He tries to open up the position and go for an immediate attack. With 5... ♙d6 (*Überdeckung!*) Black is winning time to consolidate his position. The bishop protects e5, making it easier for Black to keep the e5 stronghold. Thus, he not only gains time for completing his development, but he also keeps the position closed for the moment. Another advantage of keeping the bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal is that ♙a3 (a standard move to prevent castling) is avoided. Naturally, there are some dangers connected to the move 5... ♙d6. It takes more time to develop the c8-bishop, which might make it difficult to prevent the manoeuvre ♘h4-f5 (however, see the main game!).

6.d4

Instead, 6.0-0 is a less forcing move order. 6... ♘f6 (6... ♘a5 has been played here, it tries to show that 6.0-0 is inaccurate. However, I cannot recommend it on account of the simple 7. ♙e2 ♘f6 8.d4, when Black must play 8... ♘c6. Now 9. ♙c4 transposes to the main line, but 9.dxe5 looks like a strong alternative) 7. ♞e1 (7.d4 transposes to the main line) 7... ♙e7! (well-played! White has dithered with 6.0-0 and 7. ♞e1, giving Black time for this unexpected loss of tempo. Pillsbury now gets a 'normal', Ruy Lopez-like position with a sound pawn up) 8.d4 d6 9. ♖b3 0-0 10. ♘g5 ♗e8 (White's primitive attack on f7 has failed, and his pieces will be thrown back. The threat is 11... ♘a5. Instead of 10... ♗e8 also strong is 10...d5) 11. ♖d1 h6 12. ♘f3 ♙g4 13. ♘a3 ♘h7 14. ♞b1 ♞b8 15. ♘c2 ♘g5 16. ♗h1 ♗h8 17. ♘e3 ♙xf3 18.gxf3 ♘h3, and Black was materially and positionally better, Schiffers-Pillsbury, Hastings 1895.

6... ♘f6

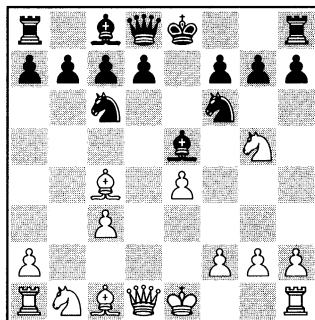
Speedy and natural development is a necessity after a move like 5... ♙d6. In the 19th century players were fond of moves like: 6...h6 (McDonnell), 6... ♗e7 (Kieseritzky) and 6... ♗f6 (Bilguer and Hanham).

7.0-0

The most logical. Rather meek is 7. ♘bd2 0-0 8. ♙b5 ♞e8 9.d5 ♘a5 10.0-0 c6 11.dxc6 dxc6, and Black was a pawn up for nothing in Szarka-Keszler, corr. 1991.

It is important to react correctly when White takes on e5.

So, after 7.dxe5 7... ♘xe5 is a mistake, because 8. ♘xe5 ♙xe5 9.f4 is awkward to meet. Therefore, Black should continue 7... ♙xe5, as 8. ♘xe5 ♘xe5 gains a valuable tempo. After the consistent 8. ♘g5 Black must take care:



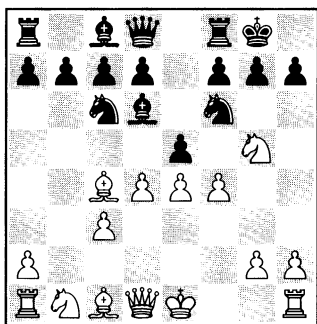
– 8...0-0?! 9.f4 h6?! 10. ♘xf7 ♞xf7 11. ♙xf7+ ♗xf7 12.fxe5 ♘xe5 13.0-0 d6 14. ♙f4± Annageldiev-Najjar, Beirut tt 2000.

– 8...d5! (a well-timed central thrust) 9.exd5 ♘a5 10. ♗a4+ c6 11.dxc6 0-0 12. ♙a3 ♘xc4 13. ♗xc4 (13. ♙xf8? ♗d3! or 13... ♙xc3+, and Black should win) 13...b5 14. ♖b3?! b4!? 15. ♙xb4 (15. ♗xb4) 15... ♞b8 16. ♗c4 ♞xb4! 17. ♗xb4 ♗d3 Fiorito-Krantz, corr. 1988, and White resigned as there is no satisfactory defence to the multitude of threats (♙a6, ♞e8). Instead

of 14...b4 Black may also consider Stefanova's 14...♙f4 (see the note to White's 7th move in Short-Sokolov below).

Another direct attempt is: 7.♘g5 0-0 8.♚xf7? ♜xf7 9.♙xf7+ ♚xf7 10.f4 exd4 11.e5 ♙e7 12.exf6 ♙xf6 13.0-0 d5, when Black had fine compensation for the exchange in Bird-Pillsbury, Hastings 1895, after 14.♚d2 dxc3 15.♚f3 ♘g8 16.♞b1 b6 17.♙e3 ♙g4 18.♞a4 ♙xf3 19.♞xf3 ♞d6 20.♞d1 ♞d8 21.♞h3 d4 22.♙c1 ♞e6 23.♞c2 d3! Pillsbury secured a winning advantage.

However, after 7.♘g5 0-0 the correct way to proceed is 8.f4!.



Now 8...exd4 9.e5 ♙xe5 10.♚xf7 ♜xf7 11.♙xf7+ ♚xf7 12.fxex5 ♚xe5 13.cxd4 favours White. However, for the piece sacrifice 9...♙c5 see the note to White's 7th move in Short-Sokolov below. So Black should play 8...exf4 9.e5 ♙xe5 (Here 9...♚xe5! is a suggestion of Zaitsev's. After 10.dxe5 ♙xe5 Black has four pawns for the piece and an edge in development. This may well mean a comfortable advantage!) 10.dxe5 ♚xe5 11.♙b3 h6 12.♚h3 g5 13.0-0 (13.♙xf4!? gxf4 14.♚xf4, and White is better, according to Zaitsev) 13...d6 (13...♘g6 14.♞d3 d5 15.♞d1 ♙g4 and Black had excellent compensation in Diani-Correa, corr. 1992) 14.♚f2 ♙e6 15.♚d2 ♞d7 16.♚fe4 ♚xe4 17.♚xe4, and now Black should improve upon 17...f5?

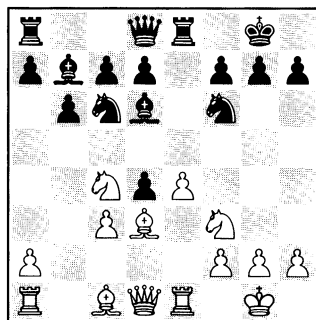
(17...♞c6 or 17...♚g7 are likely candidates) 18.♚c5 ♙xb3 19.♞xb3+ ♞f7 20.♚xb7±, Anderssen-Kieseritzky, London 1851.

7...0-0 8.♞e1

The main move, but it is good to examine the alternatives, too.

● 8.♚bd2 ♞e7?! 9.♙d3 ♚e8?! (9...b6) 10.♚c4 f6 11.♚e3 (now it clear that White has sufficient compensation) 11...g6 12.♚d5 (12.♚g4) 12...♞d8 13.♙e3 ♙e7 14.♚d2 d6 15.f4 ♚g7 16.f5 g5 17.h4!± gxf4 18.♞g4 ♚h8 19.♞xf4 ♞d7 20.♚f2 ♙d8 21.♞h1 ♚e8 22.♞h3 ♚a5 23.♞ah1 ♞f7 24.♙e2 ♞g7 25.♙h5 ♘g8 26.♙xe8 ♞xe8 27.♞xf7+ (in style, but 27.♞g3 was also sufficient) 27...♞xf7 28.♞xf7 ♙xf5 29.exf5 ♞f8 30.♞h8+ ♚f7 31.♞h7+ ♞g7 32.♙h6 ♞xf7 33.♞xf7+ (missing 33.♞f8 mate) 33...♚g8 34.♞g7+ ♚h8 35.♚e4 1-0 Kennedy-Pillsbury, Philadelphia 1895. This game was played before Pillsbury's triumph at Hastings!

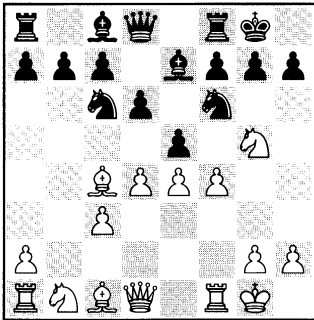
There are improvements for Black, of course. Thus, 8...b6 was seen in Johnson-Montecatini, correspondence game 1996. After 9.♙d3 ♞e8 10.♞e1 exd4 11.cxd4 ♙f4 12.♚f1 ♙xc1 13.♞xc1 ♙b7 14.e5 White had attacking chances for the pawn. On the 10th move (so after 8.♚bd2 b6 9.♙d3 ♞e8 10.♞e1) Black, in my opinion, can play 10...♙b7!?. After 11.♚c4 exd4 there can follow:



- 12.cxd4 ♖b4!
- 12.♗xd6 cxd6 13.cxd4 ♗b4.
- 12.e5 ♗xe5 13.♗fxe5 ♖xe5 14.♗xe5 (or 14.♖xe5 d5 15.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 16.♗a3 dxc3) 14...d6, with an unclear position.

As an afterthought, 8...h6!? is also interesting after 8.♗bd2.

● 8.♗g5 ♖e7, and now the sharp 9.f4 d6, for example:



- 10.♖d3 h6 (better is 10...exd4! 11.cxd4 d5 12.exd5 (12.♖xd5 ♗xd5 13.exd5 ♖xe5 14.dxc6 ♖f6) 12...♗b4) 11.♗f3 d5?! 12.fxe5 dxc4 13.♖e2, Quintero Velez-Valencia Obando, Medellin 2000.

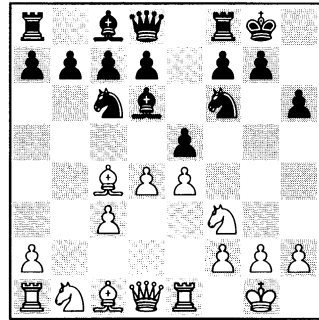
- 10.♗d2 exd4 11.cxd4 d5 12.exd5 h6? (correct is 12...♗xd5!, when 13.♗xf7? ♖xf7 14.♖h5 ♖e6 15.f5 has been suggested, but this loses outright to 15...♗f6) 13.♗xf7 ♖xf7 14.dxc6 ♖xd4+ 15.♖h1 ♖xa1? 16.♖b3, and White won in Seidman-Mengarini, New York 1951.

● Finally, 8.♖e2 b6 (8...h6) 9.♖d5 ♖e8 10.♖g5 ♖b7 11.♗xe5 ♖xe5 12.dxe5 ♖xe5 13.f4 ♖e8 14.e5 ♖e7 15.♖xc6 ♖xc6 16.♖c4 ♖e6! 17.♖xe6 ♖xe6 was Lawrence-Woschkat, IECG email 1998. The draw is forced after 18.exf6 ♖e2 19.♖f2 ♖e1+ 20.♖f1 ♖e2.

8...h6

Black prepares to regroup with ♖e8 and ♖f8. With 8...h6 he prevents both ♗g5 and

♗g5. A possible drawback is that the light squares on the kingside (f5, g6) are weakened. Jobava attempts to demonstrate this with his next move.



9.♗h4

Consistent in a way, but the move is refuted by Grischuk's energetic play.

In Yearbook 70 Genna Sosonko analysed 9.♖d5 ♗xd5 10.exd5 ♗e7 11.dxe5 ♖c5 12.d6 ♗g6 (so far an analysis by Mikhailchishin who gave the verdict 'unclear', Sosonko continues his line with) 13.♖e3 cxd6 14.exd6 ♖b6 to conclude that Black is OK.

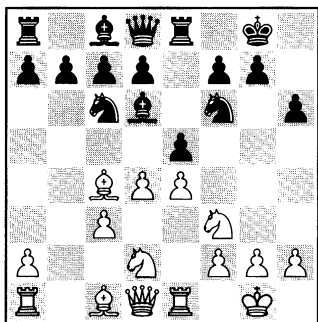
It is better to complete development first with 9.♗bd2. Let us examine this line in some detail:

A) 9...a6 10.♖b2 b5 11.♖b3 ♖e8 12.♗h4 (only now!) 12...♗a5 13.♗f5 ♗xb3 14.axb3 exd4 15.♗xd6 cxd6 16.cxd4 d5 (or 16...♖b7 17.d5) 17.e5 ♗h7 18.♖a3± Grosar-Vodopivec, Nova Gorica 1997.

B) 9...exd4 is extremely risky, but perhaps worth investigating for Black: 10.e5 (after 10.cxd4 ♖b4 Black is fine after both 11.e5 d5 and 11.d5 ♖c3) 10...dxc3 11.exd6 cxd2 12.♖xd2 cxd6 13.♖xd6 ♗e8 14.♖g3 d5 15.♖d3 (not 15.♖xh6 dxc4 16.♖xe8 ♖f6-+) 15...♖h8 16.♖a3 ♖g8 17.h4 ♖f6 (17...♗f6) 18.♖ab1 (White has obvious compensation. Pillsbury and consultants

now return a pawn) 18...♙f5!? 19.♙xf5 ♖xf5 20.♜xb7 ♗g6 21.♞f4 f6 22.♞a4 ♜c8 23.♞d7 ♞f5 24.♞f7 ♞d3?! 25.h5 ♚e5 26.♜xe5 fxe5 27.♚xe5 ♖b1+ 28.♜h2 ♚f6? (better was 28...♞b8) 29.♚g6+ ♜h7 30.♜xf6!, and with this *coup de grâce* the first World Champion soon won in the exhibition game Steinitz-Pillsbury/Stone/Barry, Boston 1892.

C) 9...♞e8



This is Black's most sensible reply. There are several practical examples from this position. I think Black should be fine.

C1) 10.♙b2 b6 11.a4 ♞b8 12.h3 ♙b7 13.♙a2 ♙f8 14.♞b3 d5 15.exd5 ♚a5 16.♞c2 exd4 17.♞xe8 ♞xe8 18.♞el ♞d8 19.♚xd4 ♚xd5, Ellis-Tait, corr. 1999.

C2) 10.♙b3 ♙f8 (not 10...♚a5 11.♙c2 exd4 12.e5. However, for 10...b5 see Short-Sokolov below) 11.♚xe5 ♚xe5 12.dxe5 ♞xe5 13.♚f3 ♞e7 (or 13...♞e8 14.e5 ♚h7 15.♞d5 ♞e7 16.♙a3) 14.e5 ♚e8 15.♚h4 (Sveshnikov has timed this manoeuvre well. An alternative was 15.e6!?) 15...d5 (in view of the threat of ♚f5, Black returns material) 16.♙xd5 ♙e6 17.♙xb7 ♞d7 18.♞a4 ♞b8 19.♙e4± Sveshnikov-Zheliandinov, Bled 2000.

C3) 10.♙d3

C31) 10...♙f8 11.♚xe5 ♚xe5 12.dxe5 ♞xe5 13.f4 ♞e8 14.e5 ♚d5 15.♞f3 c6

(15...♚xc3 was recommended by Harding, but the game continuation looks stronger, for 16.♙c2! ♚b5 17.♞d3 is scary to say the least. But perhaps it would be only a draw after 17...♙c5+ 18.♜h1 ♚d4 19.♞h7+ ♜f8 20.♞h8+ ♜e7 21.♞xg7 ♚xc2) 16.♞e4 ♚f6 17.♞f3 (hoping for a draw) 17...d5 (17...♚d5) 18.♞f1 ♚g4?! (much better was 18...♙c5+ 19.♜h1 ♚g4, and with threats like ♞h4, ♚h2 and ♞b6 Black is on top) 19.♚b3 c5 20.♙c2 d4 21.h3 dxc3? 22.hxg4 c4 23.♞e4!+-, Markosian-Mukhaev, Moscow 1995.

C32) 10...exd4 11.cxd4 ♙f8 12.e5 (12.d5 ♚b4 or 12...♚e5 13.♚xe5 ♞xe5 14.♙b2 ♞e8) 12...♚d5 13.♙c4 ♚b6 14.♙b3 d6, and White has no real compensation for the pawn. The game Sermek-Mikhalchishin, Bled 2002, went: 15.♞c2 dxe5 16.♚xe5 ♚xe5 17.dxe5 ♙e6 18.♙b2 ♚d5 19.♞e4 ♚b4 20.♞ad1 ♞c8 21.a3 ♙xb3 22.♚xb3 ♚c6 23.f4 ♞e6 24.♞c2 ♞g4 25.f5 ♞ad8 26.♞xd8 ♞xd8 27.e6f6 28.♞f1 ♞a4 29.♞c3 ♞b5 30.♞g3 ♚d3 31.♞g6 ♞xb3 32.♞f7+ ♜h7 0-1.

C4) 10.♙d5 exd4! 11.♙xc6 (or 11.cxd4 ♚xd5 12.exd5 ♞xe1+ 13.♞xe1 ♚e7 14.♞e4 c6) 11...dxc6 12.e5 dxc3 13.♚c4 ♙e7 14.♞xd8 ♞xd8 15.exf6 ♙xf6 16.♙f4 ♙e6 and according to Sosonko in Yearbook 70 Black's future is bright – 17.♚cxe5 is answered by 17...♞d5.

After this theoretical overview we now return to Jobava-Grischuk.

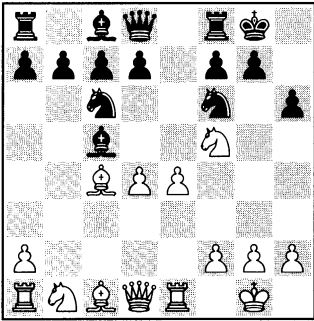
9...exd4 10.♚f5

Here 10.cxd4 is what you would expect. However, all the tactics work for Black after the intermediate 10...♙b4! 11.♙d2 ♚xe4! 12.♞xe4 (12.♙xb4 ♚xb4 13.♞xe4 d5+-) 12...d5.

10...♙c5 11.cxd4

White's position looks rather menacing. An impressive pawn centre, an outpost on f5 and an attacking bishop on c4. Grischuk has

prepared a nice central thrust to counter all this.



11...d5!

Clearly reminding White that he has a hidden lead in development. Suddenly, White's attacking pieces are hanging in the air.

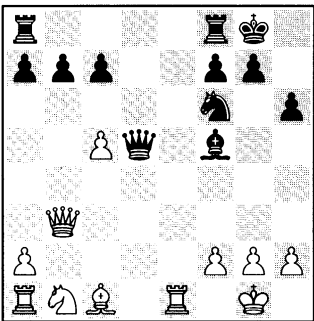
12.exd5

Worse are 12.dxc5 dxc4 13.♖xd8 ♜xd8 14.♗b2 ♗xf5 15.♗xf6 (15.exf5 ♘e4++) 15...gxf6 16.exf5 ♜d3-+ and 12.♗xd5 ♗xf5 (12...♗b4) 13.dxc5 ♗xe4.

12...♗xf5 13.dxc5 ♘a5 14.♗b3

Possibly 14.♗b5 or 14.♗f1 are better, but White's position is not to be envied in these cases either.

14...♘xb3 15.♖xb3 ♖xd5



Black is now simply a pawn up, having kept his lead in development. The rest is a matter of technique, we could say (especially in a

column on openings). However, please play through the rest of the game. Grischuk's technique may not be impeccable, but it certainly is razor-sharp.

16.♘c3 ♜fe8!

See what I mean? By gaining a tempo on White's weak back rank, the f8-rook is brought into play, threatening ♖c5. But not 16...♖xc5? 17.♗a3, nor 16...♖c6 17.♗f4 ♖xc5? 18.♗e5.

17.♗e3 ♖c6 18.♖b5

Illogical, though it is hard to give good advice here.

18...♖xb5 19.♘xb5 ♘d5 20.♗d2 ♜ed8!? 21.♜ac1 ♗g6 22.a3 c6!?

Luring the knight to d6.

23.♘d6 b6!

To undermine its position straightaway.

24.♘c4 f6 25.f3 ♗d3 26.♘b2

26.♘e3 ♘f4.

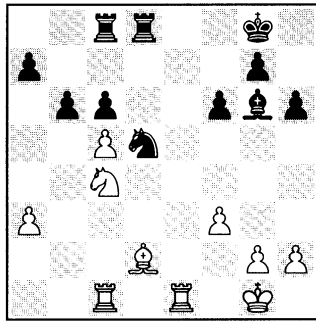
26...♗g6

The well-known Russian ploy of repeating moves in a superior position.

27.♘c4

Instead 27.cxb6 axb6 28.♜xc6 ♜xa3 was possibly a better chance for White. Exchanging pawns is generally a good idea for the defender.

27...♜ac8?!



28.♜ed1?!

Here 28.cxb6 axb6 (28...♘xb6 29.♗a5 ♜b8

30.♖e6) 29.♗xb6! ♗xb6 30.♙a5 gives White good defending chances, since Black cannot keep the knight.

After 30...♗d5 White has 31.♙xd8 ♖xd8 32.♖xc6 ♖a8 33.♖a1. So Black should go for 30...♗d3! 31.♙xb6 ♖xa3, when he is still a long way from victory.

28...♗d7 29.♙e3 ♖cd8 30.cxb6 axb6 31.♙f2 b5

Now the queenside majority gives Black a winning advantage.

32.♗a5 ♗f4

Again playing for tactics.

33.♖xd7 ♖xd7 34.♖a1

A sad necessity.

34...♗d6 35.♙e3 ♗d3 36.a4? ♖e6 37.♙d2

37.axb5 ♖xe3 (37...cxb5) 38.b6 ♖e5 39.♖b1 ♗c5.

37...♖e2 38.♖a2 ♙f7 39.♖c2 b4 40.♙f1 ♖f2+ 41.♙g1 b3 42.♖b2 ♗xb2

White resigned, as the b-pawn goes for touchdown after 43.♙xf2 ♗d1+ 44.♙e2 b2.

□ Nigel Short

■ Ivan Sokolov

Sarajevo 2004

Comments: Carlos Matamoros

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♙c4 ♙c5 4.b4

At the end of the last year I played at the open section of the Drammen Festival in the company of my pupil WFM and Spain female junior champion Paloma Gutiérrez. In her very first game she had to face the Evans Gambit and although her loss was not due to the opening we decided to do some theoretical work.

4...♙xb4 5.c3 ♙d6

We first concentrated on the generally accepted 5...♙a5 until we saw that Short had come up with the following shot: 6.d4 exd4 7.♖b3 ♖e7 8.0-0 ♙b6 9.cxd4 ♗xd4

10.♗xd4 ♙xd4 11.♗c3 ♗f6 12.♗b5!!.

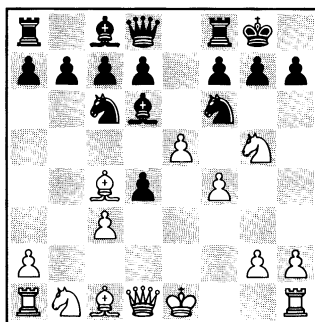
There followed 12...d5 13.exd5 ♙xa1 14.♙a3 ♖e5 15.f4 ♙d4+ 16.♙h1 ♖e3 17.♗xd4! ♖xb3 18.♖e1+ ♗d8 19.♙e7+ ♗d7 20.♗xb3 with tremendous compensation although the game ended in a draw, Short-Nielsen, Skanderborg 2003. We faced ourselves with the unappealing task of improving Black's play. Luckily the Women's World Champion Stefanova came to our rescue some rounds later when in the premier group at Drammen she won a brilliant game with 5...♙d6 which caught our attention.

6.d4 ♗f6

The apparently offbeat 5...♙d6 has a quite classical idea, namely, to hold the centre. Ideally Black will unravel his pieces by means of ...h6 (to avoid ♗g5), ...♖e8 and ...♙f8. If the circumstances are unfavourable the B plan will be ...exd4 followed by the retreat of the king's bishop. In this case Black gives up the centre but only when he is more developed. Black can also play ...b6 and ...♙b7 but this seems to me reliable only in some very particular situations.

7.0-0

After 7.♗g5 0-0 8.f4 although 8...exf4 might well be playable as seen above, Paloma came out with the following interesting idea: 8...exd4!? 9.e5



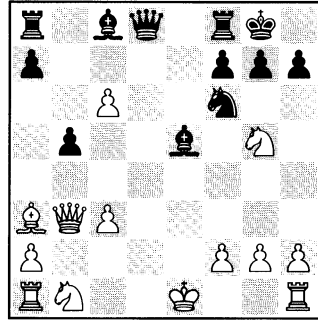
9...♙c5! (Black jettisons a piece as with

8...exf4 but wants to take advantage of White's uncastled king) 10.exf6 (this is of course critical, the alternatives shouldn't worry Black: 10.♟xf7 (10.♞d3 d5 11.exf6 ♜e8+ 12.♟f1 g6 13.♟b3 ♟f5 14.♞d1 h6 15.♟f3 ♞xf6-+) 10...♞xf7 11.♟xf7+ ♟xf7 12.exf6 ♞e8+! (an important intermediate move to avoid ♞h5+, picking the bishop on c5) 13.♟f1 (after 13.♞e2 ♞xe2+ 14.♟xe2 ♟xf6♣ Black has too many pawns for the exchange, not to mention the bishop pair) 13...♟xf6!. I really like Black's position. White's king is much more insecure than Black's and ...b6 followed by ...♟a6+ (amongst other ideas) is coming) 10...d5. If Black is allowed to play ...♞e8+, and ...♞xf6 (possible after ...h6) he will have three pawns for the piece plus attack. The following variations are only sample lines of what may happen:

- 11.♟d3 ♜e8+ 12.♟f1 g6 followed by 13...♞xf6 with good attacking chances.
- 11.♞h5 ♟f5 12.fxg7 ♜e8+ 13.♟f1 ♟g6 14.♞f3 dxc4 15.f5 ♞e7 16.g4 ♟e5 17.♞d1 ♞f6-+.
- 11.♟e2 ♞xf6♣ 12.0-0? d3+.
- 11.♟b3 ♜e8+ 12.♟f1 h6 13.♟f3 ♞xf6 14.♟xd5 dxc3♣.

The aforementioned game of Stefanova's continued **7.dxe5 ♟xe5!** 8.♟g5 (8.♟a3 was played in Van der Wiel-Sokolov Leeuwarden 2004. After 8...d6 9.♟b5 ♞e7! 10.0-0 0-0 11.♟xe5 ♞xe5 12.♟d3 ♜e8 13.f4 ♞a5 14.♞c2 b6! 15.♟b2 ♟a6 16.♟xa6 ♞xa6 White was simply a pawn down) 8...d5! 9.exd5 ♟a5 10.♞a4+ c6 11.dxc6 0-0! 12.♟a3 (12.cxb7 ♟xb7 13.0-0 ♟xh2+ 14.♟xh2 ♞c7+ 15.♟g1 ♟xc4♣) 12...♟xc4 13.♞xc4 b5! 14.♞b3 (after 14.♞xb5 ♜e8 15.0-0 ♞c7 16.♟f3 a5! Black has very good compensation for just one pawn. It's not easy to find good places for both White's queen and king's rook. A sam-

ple variation: 17.♞c5 ♟a6 18.♞c1 ♞ad8 19.♟bd2 ♞d5-+) and now instead of 14...b4 as mentioned on the notes of the Jobava-Grischuk game, Stefanova came with another nice solution.

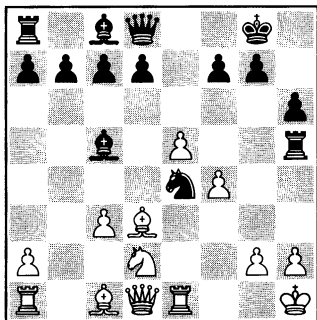


14...♟f4! 15.♟xf8 ♞e8+ 16.♟f1 ♟xg5 17.h4 ♟h6 18.♟c5 ♞xc6 19.♟d4 ♟e4 20.♞d1 ♟b7 21.♞h2 ♞d8 and due to the threats of ...b4 and ...♟f4 Black is already winning, Lie-Stefanova, Drammen 2005.

It looks logical to develop the queen's bishop before playing ♟bd2: **7.♟g5** 0-0 8.♟bd2 (on 8.0-0 there follows 8...♟e7! 9.♟bd2 - 9.dxe5 ♟xe4 - 9...d6 and White would be fine weren't for the fact that he misses a pawn on b2, Kantsler-Kosashvili, Israel 2003) 8...exd4 (Black makes use of plan B) 9.cxd4 ♟e7 10.e5 (the alternatives are no better: 10.d5 ♟a5 11.♟d3 ♟xd5!; 10.0-0 d5! 11.♟xf6! ♟xf6 12.♟xd5 ♟xd4♣) 10...♟h5! 11.♟xe7 (or 11.♟e3 d5) 11...♞xe7 12.0-0 ♟f4 13.g3 (13.♞e1 d5 14.♟b3 ♟f5♣) 13...d5! 14.♟b3 ♟e6♣.

7...0-0 8.♞e1 h6 9.♟bd2 ♜e8 10.♟b3 This retreat of the bishop eyeing f7 and preparing ♟c4 is perhaps the most dangerous move for Black. Against 10.♟d3 I very much like 10...♟f8 (10...exd4 as above is also interesting) 11.dxe5 ♟xe5 12.♟xe5 ♜xe5 13.♟f3 (13.f4 was mentioned above, but Paloma came out with 13...♟c5+!

14. ♖h1 ♜h5! 15.e5 – else ...d6 or ...d5 – and now she uncorked 15... ♗e4! – +)



13... ♜e8 14.e5 ♗d5 15. ♖h7+ (it doesn't seem very logical to part with this important bishop but the alternative 15. ♖c2 doesn't worry Black – after 15...c6! 16. ♜d3 g6 followed by ...d6 Black is absolutely fine) 15... ♗xh7 16. ♜xd5 ♗g8 17. ♖f4 (White has some pressure but Black is a pawn up, the bishop pair and no immediate danger faces him) 17...d6 18.exd6 ♜xe1+ (this looks better than 18... ♖e6 from P.H.Nielsen-Johannessen, Sweden tt 2003/04, which ended in a draw after 19. ♜xb7 ♖xd6 20. ♖xd6 ♜xd6 21. ♜b4) 19. ♜xe1 cxd6 20. ♗d4 (20. ♜d1 ♜f6 21. ♖xd6 ♖e6 22. ♜xb7 ♜d8 – +) 20... ♜b6 and Black seems to me to be a good pawn up (21. ♜e8 ♜b1+).

10...b5

Directed against ♗c4. 10...b6 may not stand up to scrutiny: 11. ♗c4 ♖b7 12.d5 ♗b8 13. ♗xd6 cxd6 14. ♗h4!. With ideas of ♗f5, ♜f3-g3, ♖a3. Black is in grave danger.

Plan B might well do the trick 10...exd4!? 11.cxd4 and now 11... ♖b4! 12.e5 (12.d5 ♖c3 13. ♜b1 ♗e5) 12... ♗h7 with the idea of ...d5, for example 13. ♖d5 (13. ♜c2 –

directed against ...d5 – 13...d5! – anyway – 14.exd6 ♜xe1+ 15. ♗xe1 ♜xd6 16. ♖xf7+? ♗xf7 17. ♜xh7 ♗xd4 – +) 13... ♖xd2! (13... ♗e7? 14. ♖xf7+) 14. ♖xd2 ♗e7 15. ♖c4 d5. Now White can get his pawn back but after 16.exd6 cxd6 17. ♜b3 d5! 18. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 19. ♜xe8+ ♜xe8 20. ♜xd5 ♗f6 Black is better due to the coming blockade on d5, better bishop and better pawn structure.

For 10... ♖f8 see the notes to Jobava-Grischuk. White is on top.

11.a4 b4 12. ♗c4 bxc3 13.dxe5 ♖xe5 14. ♗fxe5 ♗xe5 15. ♗xe5 ♜xe5 16. ♖f4 ♜e7 17.e5 ♗e8 18. ♜d3

White has very good compensation for the invested pawn. Although Sokolov manages to get rid off the pressure by giving back the pawn I think Black would do better to improve his play before, maybe with 10...exd4.

18...d5 19. ♜xc3

Interesting is 19. ♖c2!?

19... ♖f5 20. ♜ad1 ♜d7 21.a5 c6!

Now the knight gets back to work via c7 to e6. The passed pawn and counterplay against White's a-pawn balances White's pair of bishops.

22. ♜xc6 ♜c8 23. ♜a4 ♗c7 24. ♖e3 ♗e6 25.a6 ♗c5 26. ♖xc5 ♜xc5 27. ♜d4 ♜a5 28. ♜c6 ♜b6 29. ♜xb6 axb6 30.f4 ♜xa6 31. ♜xd5 ♜xd5 32. ♖xd5 b5 33. ♜c1 ♜b6 34. ♗f2 b4 35. ♖b3 g5 36.fxg5 hxg5 37. ♗e3 ♖e6 38. ♜b1 ♖xb3 39. ♜xb3 ♜b5 40. ♗d4 ♗g7 41.g4 ♗f8 42. ♗c4 ♖xe5 43. ♜xb4 ♖e2 44.h3 ♜e4+ 45. ♗c5 ♜e3 46. ♗d4 ♜xh3

After all the Evans Gambit is just a pawn up for Black.

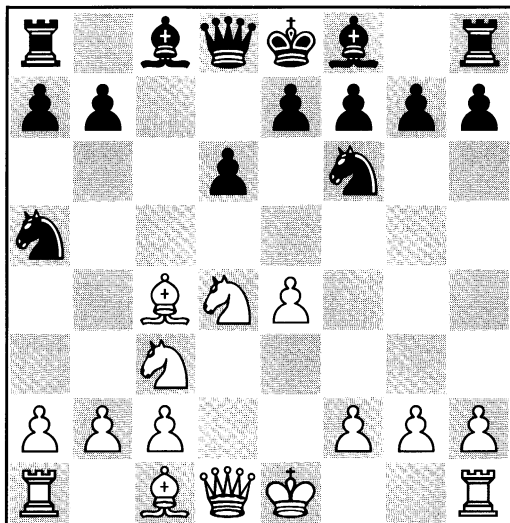
47. ♗e4 ♗g7

1/2-1/2

CHAPTER 16

Adrian Mikhalchishin

A Sozin Opening Surprise



Hitting the bishop with 6...♞a5!?

**1.e4 c5 2.♞f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4
♜f6 5.♞c3 d6 6.♞g4 ♞a5!?**

This variation was introduced into modern practice by grandmasters Rashkovsky and Ubilava. It is an interesting idea, radically changing the direction of the play in this variation. White has the following continuations:

- A) 7.♞b5+
- B) 7.♞d3
- C) 7.♞e2

Variation A

7.♞b5+ ♞d7 8.♞e2

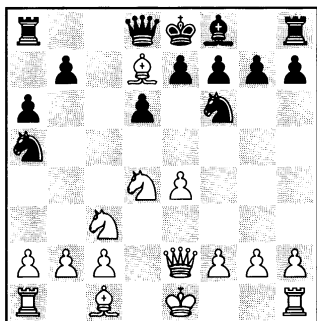
After 8.♞xd7+ ♞xd7 9.0-0 e6 10.♞d3 ♞e7

11.b3 0-0 12.♞ce2?! (this allows the liberating 12...d5. Simply 12.♞b2 was better) 12...d5 13.exd5 ♞xd5 14.c4 ♞b4 15.♞c3 ♞ac6 Black equalises, Ciganikova-Grabics, Nadole 1995.

8...e6

It is risky to play 8...♞c8 9.♞g5 ♞xb5 10.♞xb5+ ♞d7 11.♞d5 (here 11.0-0 a6 12.♞e2 ♞c4 13.♞b3 is stronger) 11...♞c4! 12.♞d2 (12.0-0) 12...♞xd4 13.♞xa5 b6 14.♞c3 ♞xe4+ 15.♞d2 e6, and Black achieved an excellent game, Gross-Chernyshov, Czech Republic 2000/01.

However, there is the natural continuation 8...a6 to consider. After 9.♞xd7+ the lines fork:



● 9...♖xd7?! 10.♔g5 e6 11.0-0-0 ♗c7 12.♙xf6 gxf6 13.f4 ♘c6 14.f5 and White has only a slight advantage, Anand-Leko, Munich blitz 1994.

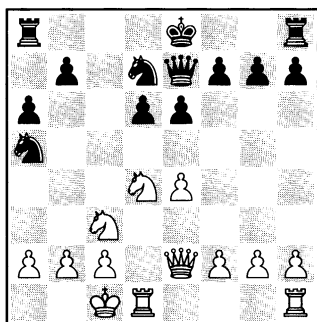
● 9...♘xd7 10.0-0 g6 11.♙g5 h6 12.♙h4 ♘c6 13.♘xc6 bxc6 14.♗h1 ♖b6 15.♞ab1 ♙g7 with equality, Sluka-Chernyshov, Ry-marov 1993.

If no improvement is found in our main line below, then Black may well prefer to play 8...a6 instead of 8...e6.

9.♙g5 ♙e7 10.0-0 a6

Forcing White to release the tension (11.♙d3 is odd of course). In practice all bishops were exchanged now.

11.♙xd7+ ♘xd7 12.♙xe7 ♗xe7



13.♘b3

In this critical position the other possible continuation is 13.f4 0-0 14.♞d3 ♞ac8

15.♞hd1 b5 16.e5 ♘c4! 17.exd6 ♖xd6! with very sharp play, Rodin-Chernyshov, Voronezh 2000.

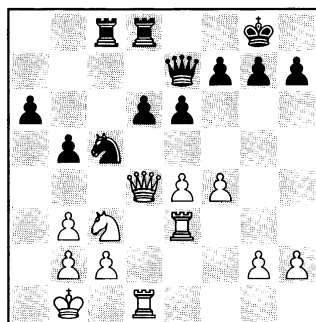
13...♘xb3+

It is a pity, but, considering the weakness of d6, Black has no choice but to take on b3.

14.axb3 ♞c8 15.♗d2 ♞c6 16.♞he1 0-0 17.♞e3 ♞d8

After 17...♗g5 18.g3 ♘f6 19.♞d3 ♖xd2+ 20.♞1xd2 ♞d8 21.e5 White clearly has the advantage in the ending, W.Arencibia-Hernandez, Oropesa del Mar 1996.

18.f4 b5 19.♗b1 ♘c5 20.♗d4 ♞cc8



21.f5!

And White has the advantage, Hracek-Chernyshov, Czech Republic 2000/01.

Variation B

7.♙d3

This was played by the great Bobby Fischer in 1964, in the first game known to the database featuring 6...♘a5.

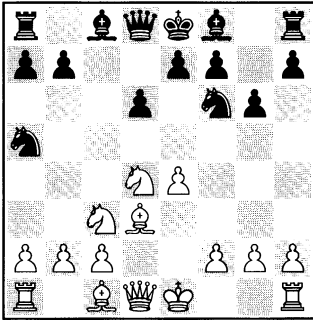
7...g6

Not illogically Black opts for a Dragon set-up. There Black often embarks upon the manoeuvre ♘c6-a5-c4. The first tempo has already been gained!

Also quite possible is 7...e5 8.♙b5+ ♙d7 9.♙xd7+ ♖xd7 10.♘b3 (or 10.♘de2 h6 11.♗d3 ♞c8 12.0-0 ♖c6 13.b3 a6 14.a4 ♙e7 15.♙d2! with advantage to White, E.Ghinda-Lendvai, Budapest 1991) 10...♘c4

11.♔g5!? (a sharp pawn sacrifice)
 11...♗xb2 12.♖f3 ♖g4 13.♔xf6 ♗xf3
 14.gxf3 gxf6 15.♘d5 ♜c8 with a sharp
 game, Fischer-Allen, Santa Barbara simul
 1964.

However after 7...e6 8.0-0 ♔e7 9.f4 a6
 10.♖h1 ♖c7 11.♘f3 e5 12.♖e1! White is a
 little better, Petrienko-Korpic, Dresden
 2000.



8.0-0

There are several alternatives at this stage. In
 the event of 8.b3 ♘c6 9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.♔b2
 ♔g7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘a4 e5 13.c4 ♘h5
 14.♘c3 ♘f4 15.♘e2 ♖a5! Black has no
 problems, Murko-G.Kuzmin, Alushta 2002.
 Possible is 8.♔e3 ♔g7 9.f3 ♘d7 10.f4
 0-0 11.♘f3 ♘c5 12.0-0 ♘xd3 13.cxd3
 ♔d7 14.♖d2 e6 15.♖h1 ♘c6 16.g4 f5!
 with a double-edged game, Martin
 Gonzalez-Ubilava, Candas 1992.
 Sharper is 8.♔g5 ♔g7 9.♖d2 0-0 10.0-0
 ♘c6 11.♘f3 ♔g4 12.h4 h5 13.♔h6 ♜c8
 14.♔xg7 ♖xg7 15.♜dg1! ♖a5 16.♖b1
 Soloviov-Chernyshov, Pardubice 2001, and
 here Black should have played 16...♘b4.

8...♔g7 9.♘b3 0-0 10.♔d2 ♘c6

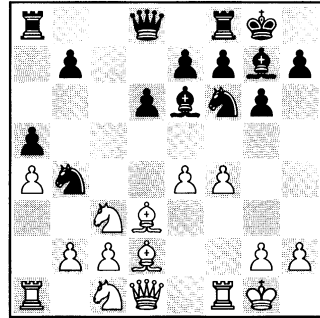
The healthy Dragon-position of Black's
 pieces makes up for the apparent loss of
 tempo.

11.f4 a5!

Characteristic of the Dragon. Black forces

White to stop the advance of the a-pawn with
 12.a4, when he can use the b4-square for his
 knight.

12.a4 ♔e6 13.♘c1 ♘b4



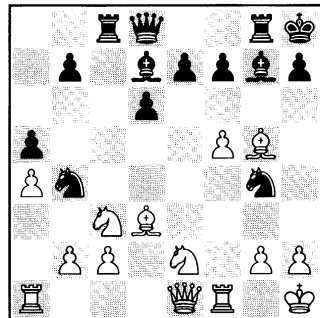
14.f5?!

Here 14.♖h1 followed by 15.♖e2 would
 have been better.

14...♔d7 15.♔g5 ♜c8 16.♖h1 ♖h8!

A remarkable manoeuvre – see Black's 19th
 move.

**17.♘1e2 ♘g4! 18.♖e1 gxf5 19.exf5
 ♜g8**



With an excellent game for Black, Fedorov-
 Chernyshov, Smolensk 2000.

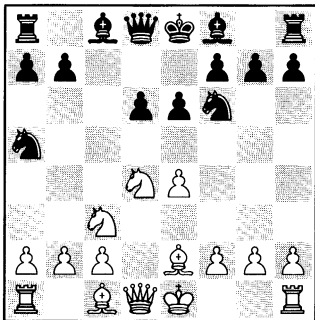
Variation C

7.♔e2 e6

Ubilava played cunningly against Sofia

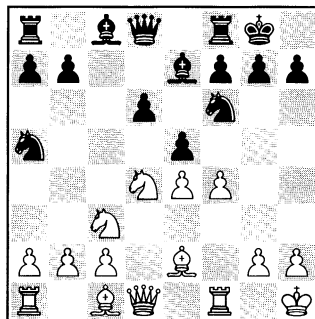
Polgar: 7...a6 8.f4 e5 9.♟f3 ♖b6 10.♞d5 ♞xd5 11.exd5 ♙g4! 12.fxe5 ♟xf3! 13.♟xf3 dxe5 14.c3 ♙d6 and achieved an excellent game.

The move 7...g6 has no point – 8.♙g5 ♙g7 9.♞d2 ♞c6 10.♞b3 0-0 11.0-0 ♙e6 12.♞ad1 and White is powerfully centralised, Zimmersman-Gyorkos, Balatonbereny 1991.



12.♞e1 ♟b8 13.a4 ♞d7 14.b3 b6 15.♙a3 ♟e8 16.♞d1 ♙b7 17.♞de2 with a slight advantage to White, Yilmaz-Leko, Budapest 1992.

In the recent game Rocha-Bauer, Nancy 2005, Black played 10...♞d7 11.♙e3 a6 12.♞e1 ♙h4! 13.♞d2 ♖c7 14.f5 ♞e5 15.♙g5 ♟xg5 16.♞xg5 f6.



8.0-0

Played in Scheveningen style. It is also possible to launch an immediate attack: 8.g4 a6 9.g5 ♞d7 10.♟g1 b5 11.a3 ♙b7 12.b3!? ♞b6 13.♞d2 ♟c8 14.♙b2 g6 15.0-0 e5! 16.b4! with an unclear game, Hernandez-Damaso, Novi Sad ol 1990.

Yet another possibility is 8.♙g5 a6 9.♞d3 ♙e7 10.f4 ♖c7 11.0-0?! (the more aggressive 11.0-0 is clearly better) 11...♙d7 12.♟h1 ♞c6 13.♞ad1 0-0 14.♞g3 ♞xd4 15.♞xd4 ♙c6 16.f5 ♟h8 17.e5! dxe5 18.♞h4 with a very complicated game, Kupreichik-Rashkovsky, Kuibyshev 1986.

8...♙e7

In the game Dimitrov-Leko, St. Ingbert 1990, Black gained equality after 8...a6 9.a4 ♙e7 10.f4 ♖c7 11.♟h1 0-0 12.♞d3 ♙d7 13.♞g3 ♟ac8 14.♙d3 ♞c6 15.♙e3 ♞b4!.

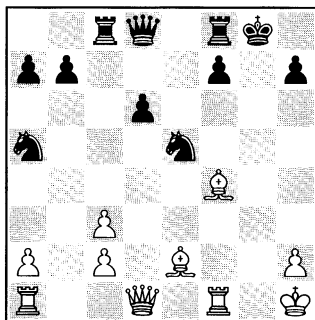
9.f4 0-0 10.♟h1 e5!

More passive is 10...a6 11.♙f3 ♖c7

11.♞f5 ♟xf5 12.exf5 ♟c8

White now started to burn all his bridges with

13.g4 exf4 14.g5 ♞d7 15.f6!? gxf6 16.gxf6 ♙xf6 17.♙xf4 ♙xc3! 18.bxc3 ♞e5!

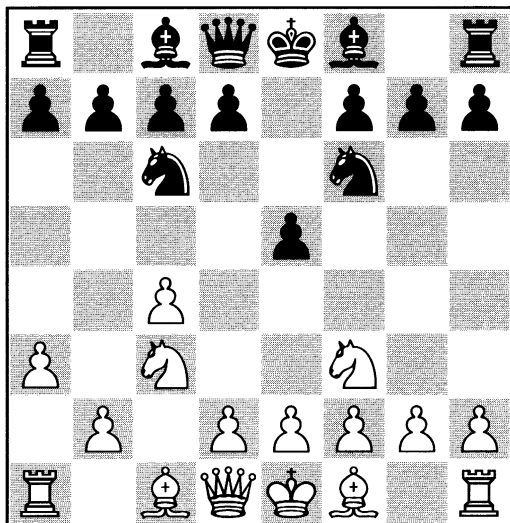


with a highly double-edged game in Doncovic-Ubilava, Pamplona 1991.

CHAPTER 17

Mikhail Gurevich

English or Sicilian Reversed



The 'modest' 4.a3!?

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♘c6 4.a3!?

This variation in the Classical Four Knights Variation of the English Opening has been around for a hundred years or so. However, the ideas behind this line have considerably changed and developed in time – as in any other opening. Thinking back of the year 1988 I vividly remember the game Chernin-Vaganian (see our first game below) which attracted my attention to the 4.a3 variation. It was this game that made me want to learn and understand the ideas behind the move 4.a3. Alexander Chernin, is a great friend of mine, and we both (Chernin first and I followed) started to play this variation on a regular basis. Something, I've actually kept up

until today. Many of the world's leading players were among my opponents as I kept testing this 'modest' 4.a3 move and – let's forget about modesty for a moment – I was satisfied with the results.

Before we proceed with the moves, let's discuss the ideas behind this 'strange' continuation. White plays a move with his rook's pawn rather than continuing to develop his pieces with more useful pawn moves like 4.g3, 4.d4, 4.d3, or 4.e3. After all, these moves would open up some diagonals for the bishops. What, then, is the idea behind 4.a3? It isn't exactly a classical approach, but let's not use the word 'classical' anymore when discussing the English Opening.

First of all, 4.a3 is a prophylactic against Black's bishop coming to b4, as in the 4.g3 ♗b4 variation. Remember, this is generally seen as Black's best option. So, it's especially advisable for rapid and blitz chess where there is always a chance the opponent will play 4...♗b4...

OK let's not kid ourselves, back to serious business. The move 4.a3! has a great psychological advantage, it might surprise – indeed even shock – our opponent(s). Just consider for a moment the situation. Put yourself in your opponent's shoes. He thought he was playing an English Opening with Black, where he properly learned all these lines after 4.g3 ♗b4. And, suddenly, he finds himself playing a Sicilian with White a tempo down – a tempo which we wisely spent on the typical Sicilian move a6 (in our case 4.a3).

White can afford to 'lose a tempo' in the opening to hide his real intentions. Indeed, 4.a3 is a flexible continuation, which leaves us many opportunities. White will start building his pawn structure depending upon Black's next move. Studying the games of the best players who employ this powerful opening weapon you will see that there are different interpretations. Every player adopts the plan (and chooses the pawn structure) that suits his taste.

So, to summarize my argument in a different way. In order to understand the move 4.a3, I can give only one recipe: learn to play Chess, and once you understand Chess, you understand how to play 4.a3. Or, alternatively, just go and play it, enjoy it and love it. And, if one day you feel that you understood it, give me a call, I will pay for the lessons...

We will examine a selection of games starting with the answer that is most popular in practice: 4...d5. The final three games are devoted respectively to 4...e4, 4...d6 and 4...g6.

□ **Rafael Vaganian**

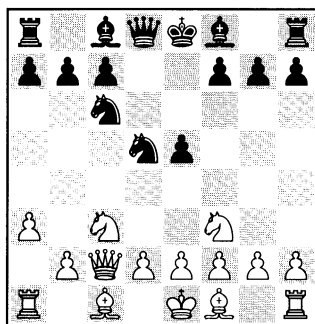
■ **Alexander Chernin**

Naberezhnye Chelni 1988

1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.a3!? d5

The most principled reaction, and the main line. Black occupies the centre, following the rules of classical chess. Although Chernin was not a 1.e4 player, faced by a surprise continuation, he follows the general rules. Only to find himself in an unfamiliar position a few moves later.

5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♖c2



An excellent (Sicilian!) move. Other continuations can be considered:

I will largely leave the alternative 6.e4 to the blind followers of the Sicilian Sveshnikov.

– After 6...♗f4 7.d3 ♗g4 8.♗e3 ♗xf3 9.♖xf3 ♗d4 10.♖d1 c6 11.g3 ♗fe6 12.♗h3 ♗e7 13.0-0 0-0 14.f4 exf4 15.gxf4 f5 16.♗e2 ♗c5, Ibragimov-Galliamova, St Petersburg 1998, Black had a comfortable game. A Sveshnikov player would seriously consider 7.d4 though.

– Rechlis-Manor, Tel Aviv 1994, went 6...♗f6 7.♗b5 ♗d6 8.d4 exd4 9.♖xd4 0-0 10.♗xc6 bxc6, when after the blunder 11.e5?, White had to suffer in order to survive: 11...♗xe5 12.♖xd8 ♗xc3+ 13.bxc3 ♖xd8 and so on.

Naturally, one can play in Scheveningen style with: **6.d3** ♖e7 7.e3 ♙e6 8.♙e2 0-0 9.0-0 a5 10.♗c2 ♘b6 11.b3 f5 12.♙b2 ♙f6 13.♘d2 ♗d7 14.♙fd1 ♙ad8 15.♙ab1 ♗f7 16.♙a1 ♙e7 17.♘b5 ♘d5 18.♘c4 ♙f6 19.♙f3, Kharlov-Stefanova, Ubeda 1999, with a complicated, typically Sicilian, position.

Also playable is **6.e3**.

6...♘xc3

Possibly not the best reaction. This exchange allows White to improve his central pawns structure. We will subsequently discuss some alternatives.

7.bxc3 ♙d6 8.g3!±

Both the exclamation mark and the evaluation are Vaganian's. They reflect his understanding of the position at the time. I don't want to be too critical. After all, we learned a lot from his games.

Still, Black didn't do anything criminal, and hardly suffers from any weaknesses. So, in my opinion, the evaluation that White is slightly better can only be justified by Vaganian's optimism and the outcome of the game.

8...♗e7 9.d3 0-0 10.♙g2 ♙d7! 11.0-0 ♘a5 12.♘d2!

Stronger than the active 12.♘g5 f5!? 13.♙d5+!? (please don't win a pawn with 13.♙xb7?! ♘xb7 14.♗b3+ ♖h8 15.♗xb7 h6 when Black is slightly better) 13...♖h8 14.♗a2 ♙e8! with unclear play.

The game is equal after 12.d4 e4! 13.♘g5 f5 14.f3 h6. Interesting is 12.e4!? c5 13.♘h4 g6, though chances are still even.

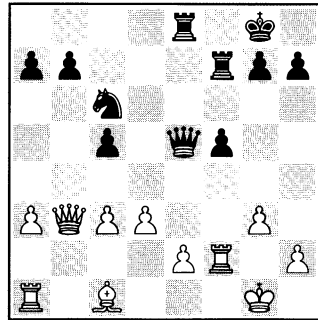
12...c5 13.♘e4 f5!?

After 13...♙c7?!, White has 14.c4 (Δ ♘c3-d5, ♙b2) 14...♘c6 15.e3±.

14.♘xd6 ♗xd6 15.f4!

White has a pair of bishops and is opening up the game in the centre.

15...♙ae8 16.fxe5 ♗xe5 17.♙f2 ♙c6 18.♙xc6 ♘xc6 19.♗b3+ ♙f7



20.g4!± ♘a5 21.♗a4! ♘c6! But not 21...b6? 22.gxf5. **22.♙d2! ♙e6** White calculated: 22...fxg4 23.♙xf7 ♖xf7 24.♗c4+! (not 24.♙f1+? ♖g8 25.♗c4+ ♗e6!) 24...♗e6 25.♗xc5 ♗xe2 26.♗f5+ ♖g8 27.♙e1+- **23.♙af1 ♙g6 24.g5!** Inaccurate is 24.♙g2?! ♗d5!. **24...♙e6** Returning to the centre as 24...h6?! fails to 25.♗c4! intending 26.♗f7 or 26.♙f5. **25.e4 g6** Or 25...f4?! 26.♙xf4 ♗xc3 27.♙d2+- **26.♗b3 ♘a5 27.♗c2!** 27.♗d5? ♗xd5 28.exd5 ♙e8. **27...c4?!** A decisive mistake in *Zeitnot*. Rafael now converts his initiative into a winning endgame. After the stronger 27...♘c6!?, White plays 28.♗a2! planning 29.♙f4. **28.exf5 gxf5 29.d4! ♗e4 30.♗xe4 ♙xe4 31.♙xf5 ♙g4+ 32.♖h1 ♙xf5 33.♙xf5 ♘c6** No better is 33...♘b3 34.♙f4. **34.♙c5 ♙e4 35.♙xc4 ♖f7 36.♙c5 ♖g6 37.♖g1 ♙e2 38.♙f4 ♘e7 39.♖f1 ♙b2 40.♖e1 ♘f5 41.d5 ♘h4 42.♖d1 ♘g2 43.♙d2 ♖f5 44.d6+** Black resigned because of 44...♖e6 45.♙d5 ♖d7 46.♙d4.

□ Mikhail Gurevich

■ Anatoly Karpov

Cap d'Agde 2000

This was an 'active' chess game. I present it because of the interesting strategic fight.

**1.c4 ♘f6 2.♗c3 e5 3.♗f3 ♘c6 4.a3 d5
5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♖c2 ♗xc3 7.bxc3
♙d6**

In Chernin-Friedman, New York 1997, White was clearly better after 7...♙e7 8.g3 0-0 9.♙g2 ♖b8 10.0-0 h6 11.d4 ♙d6 12.♙b2 ♖e7 13.e3 b6 14.c4 ♖e8 15.♖fc1 e4 16.♗d2 f5 17.♗b3 ♗d8 18.c5 bxc5 19.dxc5 ♙e5 20.♙xe5 ♖xe5 21.♗d4 c6 22.♙f1 ♙d7 23.♖a4.

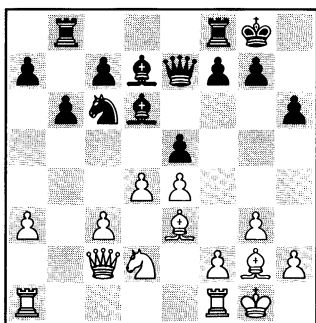
8.g3 0-0 9.♙g2 h6 10.0-0 ♖b8 11.d4

It was time to take the centre, was my feeling. After all, for how long could I play against the great Champion with my pawns on d2 and e2. Note that Karpov's strategy would have been successful in case of 11.d3 b6 12.a4 ♙b7.

11...♖e7 12.e4 ♙d7 13.♙e3 b6

The a3-pawn was untouchable: 13...♙xa3 14.d5 ♗d8 (14...♗a5 15.♖a2) 15.♗xe5. My pieces are developed, it is time to choose a plan.

14.♗d2!



Planning 15.f4 with an initiative in the centre and on the kingside.

14...♗a5 15.f4 f6

Black had to support his central pawn, but the weakness of the pawn structure on the kingside is now obvious. Naturally, I start the hunt for the opponent's monarch.

16.♗f3 ♗c4 17.♙c1 b5

Underlining my own weaknesses on the queenside.

18.♗h4 ♖e8 19.♖d1!

This is a multifunctional move. The queen eyes the kingside, and liberates the second rank for the ♖a1-a2-f2 manoeuvre, which would increase the pressure on the kingside.

19...c5!

A counter-action in the centre – a classical reaction.

20.dxe5 fxe5 21.f5 ♖f6!

This is Karpov's high class play, he prepares to occupy the d-file with counterplay in the centre.

**22.g4 ♙e7 23.♖e2 ♖d6 24.♗f3 ♖d8
25.a4**

While this isn't my side of the board, the temptation to get rid of a weakness (and to activate the a1-rook) was too strong.

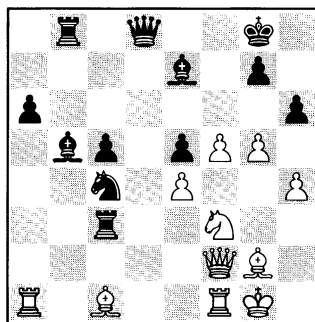
25...a6 26.axb5 ♙xb5

An active approach, although it leaves Black with numerous pawn weaknesses.

27.♖f2 ♖d3 28.h4

The sign for a decisive attack. More cautious was 28.♖e1.

28...♖xc3 29.g5



A critical position in the game – I often give it to my pupils to solve. A great example to test your chess understanding.

29...hxg5?

The wrong answer, Karpov cracks under the psychological pressure of White's attack.

After the opening up of the h-file Black's king is indefensible. Instead, Anatoly had to play 29...♖b6!, activating the last 'sleeping' piece and taking the sixth rank under control. In that case it would have been very difficult to continue the attack. After 30.f6 (30.♖h1 ♖d3 31.♖g3 ♖xe4) 30...gxf6 31.gxh6 ♖h8 the position is unclear.

30.hxg5 ♗xc1 Karpov was hoping to neutralize my attack by this exchange sacrifice, but after: **31.♖axc1 ♕xg5 32.♗xg5 ♖xg5 33.♖c3!** the attack continues, with a material edge for White. **33...♖d2 34.♖g3 ♖d4+ 35.♖h1 ♕e8** The best chance to complicate things was 35...♗d2. **36.f6 g6 37.♖d3 ♖b2 38.♖d7! ♕f7 39.♖h3** With two unavoidable threats – 40.♖h6 and 40.♖xf7 – Karpov resigned.

□ Alexander Chernin
 ■ Zsuzsa Polgar
 Brno 1993

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♖c2 ♕e7

Black wisely keeps the tension, continuing to develop her pieces.

7.e3

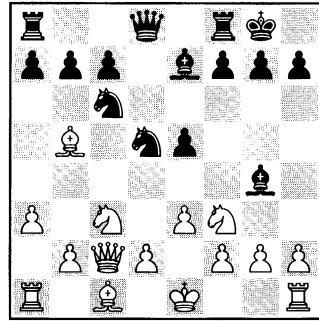
One of most critical position of the variation. **7...a6?!**

Zsufa 'blinked' first. This passive move prevents the threat of 8.♕b5, but allows Alex to demonstrate the hidden dynamic resources of the position.

The best response is **7...0-0**, proceeding as quickly as possible with the development of the pieces. Let us consider two moves in this position: 8.♕b5 and 8.♗xd5.

After **8.♕b5** Black should reply with 8...♕g4!?. This is an important position for the evaluation of the variation. Below you will find some relevant examples. I would

especially suggest the reader to study the intricacies of 9.♕xc6.



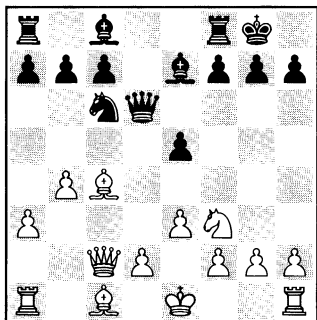
– 9.♕e2!? ♖h8 10.♗g5 ♕xg5 11.♕xg4±. White has the advantage of the two bishops, as in Matamoros Franco-Korneev, Seville 2003. In a couple of moves Korneev commits suicide: 11...f5 12.♕xf5 ♗d4 13.exd4 exd4 14.♗xd5 ♖xd5 15.♕e4 d3 16.♕xd5 ♖ae8+ 17.♖f1 dxc2 18.d3 ♕f6 19.♖a2 ♗d4 20.f3 ♕e3 21.♖a1+–.

– 9.♖d3. A creative approach of Kortchnoi's, although it didn't bring White any particular advantage: 9...♗xc3 10.♖xd8 ♗xd8 11.bxc3 e4 12.♗e5 ♕e6 13.♕e2 f5 14.d4 exd3 15.♗xd3 ♗c6 16.♖b1 ♗a5 17.♗f4 ♕a2 18.♖b2 ♕f7 19.♖b5 ♗b3 20.0-0 ♗c5, Kortchnoi-Rublevsky, Rethymnon 2003, Black has a comfortable game.

– 9.♕xc6 ♕xf3. This is modern, a computer's approach to deal with the problems. An eye for an eye: 10.♕xb7 (10.gxf3 bxc6 11.b3 ♗xc3 12.dxc3 ♖d5 13.♖e2 e4 14.♖xe4 (14.fxe4 ♖h5+ with an initiative) 14...♖xb3 15.♖b1 ♖a2+ 16.♖b2 ♖xa3 17.♖xc6 ♕f6 18.♖b7 ♖a5 19.♖b2 ♖ad8 20.♖a1 ♖f5, Beim-Rublevsky, Frankfurt 2000, and White has constant problems with his king) 10...♕xg2 (a natural reply, but not the best one it seems to me. Both 10...♗xe3 and 10...♗b4 deserve attention) 11.♗xd5 ♕xd5 12.♕xa8 ♕xa8 13.♖g1 ♕f3 14.d3 f5 15.e4 ♖h8 16.♕e3 fxe4 17.dxe4 ♗d6

18.♖g3 a5 19.♞c1 ♖h4 20.h3 h6 21.♖d3 ♕h5 22.♗d2 ♜d8 23.♗c4 and White was better in Harikrishna-Dao Thien Hai, Calcutta 2000.

Having discussed 8.♗b5, we will now investigate **8.♗xd5**. After 8...♗xd5 White may consider 9.♗d3 g6 10.b4. Practice has seen instead 9.♗c4 ♖d6 10.b4 and now:



– 10...♗f6 11.♞b1 ♗e7 12.d3 ♗f5 13.h3 ♜ad8 14.e4 ♗e6 15.♗xe6 ♖xe6 16.0-0 ♜d7 17.♞d1 ♞fd8 18.♗e3 a6 19.a4 h6 20.♖b3 (20.b5!?) was interesting pressurizing the queenside) Black is OK in the endgame. 20...♗xb3 21.♞xb3 ♗g6 22.♗f1 ½-½ Piket-Ivanchuk, Wijk aan Zee 2001.

– 10...a6!?! 11.♗b2 ♗e6 (an accurate way of neutralizing the activity of White's bishops) 12.0-0!?! ♗f6 (planning 12...e4) 13.♗d3!?! h6 14.♗h7+ ♗h8 15.♗e4 ♗d5 16.♗c3!?! (intending ♞ab1, a4, b5) 16...♞fe8! 17.♗xd5 (this allows Black to equalize the game. Play is also equal after 17.a4 ♗d4! 18.exd4 ♗xe4 19.♖xe4 exd4 20.♖xb7 ♞ab8 21.♖a7 dxc3 22.dxc3 ♗xc3 23.♞ac1 ♗b2 24.♞c7 ♞xb4 25.♞b7. But 17.♞ab1!?! continuing an active plan on the queenside was correct, then 17...♗d4 is answered by 18.♗xd4! exd4 19.♗xd5 ♖xd5 20.♖xc7±) 17...♖xd5 18.d3 ♜ad8 19.♞fd1 ♞d7 20.e4 (or 20.a4 b5 21.e4 ♖e6=) 20...♖e6 with equal chances in Gurevich-Khalifman, Wijk aan Zee 2002.

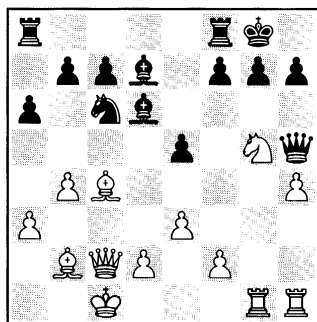
8.♗xd5!

Better than the alternatives 8.♗e2 and 8.b4 ♗xc3! 9.dxc3=.

8...♖xd5 9.♗d3!

This stops Black from castling, and creates the unpleasant threat of 10.♗e4, 11.♗xc6, and 12.♗xe5. Weaker was 9.♗c4 ♖d6 with equality.

9...♗d7 A blunder is 9...♗g4? 10.♗e4 ♖d6 11.♗xc6+ bxc6 12.♗xe5+-. **10.b4 ♖e6** Slightly unnatural, but the immediate 10...♗d6?? is met by 11.♗c4+-. **11.♗b2 ♗d6** Or 11...f5 12.0-0 e4 13.♗c4 ♖g6 14.♗e5±. **12.♗g5!** White's initiative develops naturally after this move. Less accurate was 12.0-0 ♖h6!=. **12...♖g4?!** White is also better after 12...♖h6 13.h4±. Best was 12...♖e7 13.♗e4±. **13.h4! ♖xg2** Here 13...h6 is met by 14.♗e4 (after 14.♗e2 Black has 14...♖xg2 (not 14...♖f5 15.♗e4 △ 16.g4±) 15.♗f3 ♖xh1+ 16.♗xh1 hxg5 with compensation for the queen) 14...♖xg2 15.0-0-0 with excellent compensation. **14.0-0-0 ♖g4 15.♞dg1 ♖h5 16.♗c4!** Even better than 16.♗xh7 0-0-0 17.♞xg7 ♗xb4 18.♗f6 ♖h6 19.♞xf7 ♗e6 20.♗f5±. **16...0-0** This is the only move as 16...♗d8 is answered by 17.f4+--.



17.f4?! White had an aesthetic manoeuvre available to finish Black off: 17.♗e2! ♖h6 18.♗d3! f5□ 19.♗c4+ (19.♖c4+ ♗h8 20.♗f7+? ♞xf7 21.♖xf7 ♗e6+)

19...♖h8 20.♟f7+ ♜xf7 21.♙xf7 with a decisive edge. **17...♖h8 18.♙d5** The immediate 18.♟xf7+? fails to 18...♜xf7 19.♜g5 ♜f3 20.♜f1 ♜h3. Possible was 18.♙e2 ♜h6 19.♙d3. The text sets a trap. **18...♜ae8?** Correct was 18...f6! 19.♙f3 ♜h6 20.♙e4 exf4 21.♟xh7 fxe3!±. Now the combination from the previous note is playable. **19.♟xf7+! ♜xf7 20.♜g5** The game is over. **20...♜f5** Or 20...♙f5 21.♙xf7 ♙xc2 22.♙xh5. **21.♜xh5 ♜xh5 22.♙f7 ♜h6 23.♙xe8 ♙xe8 24.♜f5 ♜f6 25.♜c8 ♜f8 26.♜g1 ♙f7 27.♜xb7** And Black resigned. A great creative achievement of Alex Chernin.

□ Mikhail Gurevich

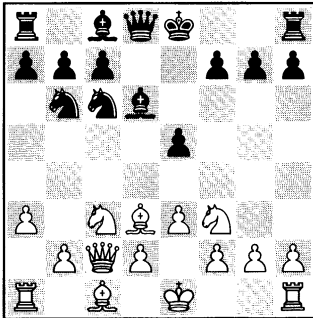
■ Juan Gomez Esteban

Linares zt 1995

1.c4 e5 2.♟c3 ♟f6 3.♟f3 ♟c6 4.a3 d5 5.cxd5 ♟xd5 6.♜c2 ♟b6!?

Another way to deal with the tension between these knights, although Black's knight withdraws from the action zone.

7.e3 ♙d6 8.♙d3!?



An important manoeuvre. It forces Black to play:

8...h6

Which takes the square from Black's major pieces in the future, and therefore helps to protect White's king.

9.b4 0-0

Intending ...f5 and ...e4. Losing is 9...♙xb4? 10.axb4 ♟xb4 11.♙b5+ c6 12.♜e4+-. White keeps an opening advantage after 9...a6 10.♙e2 (10.♙b2 ♙xb4 11.♙e4 ♙d6 12.♙xc6+ bxc6 13.♟e4±) 10...0-0 11.d3 ♙e6 12.0-0 ♜e7 13.♙b2.

10.♙e2 f5 11.d3 ♜f6 12.♙b2 ♙d7!?
13.0-0 ♜g6 14.b5!?

White is also slightly better after 14.♟b5!? ♜ae8 (14...♟xb4 15.axb4 ♙xb5 16.♟xe5±) 15.♟xd6 cxd6 16.♜ac1.

14...♟e7 15.♙a4

To gain control over the e5 square. Instead 15.d4 exd4 (15...e4 16.♟e5f) 16.♟xd4 is well-met by 16...f4! 17.♜xg6 ♟xg6.

15...f4!?

A blunder is 15...♙xb5? 16.♜b3+.

16.♟xb6 axb6

No good is the intermediate 16...♙h3. White wins after 17.♟h4 ♜g5 18.♟xa8 f3 (18...♙xg2 19.♟xg2 f3 20.♙xf3+-) 19.♙xf3 ♜xf3 20.♟xc7.

17.♖h1

Black gains the initiative after 17.♟xe5?! ♙xe5 18.♙xe5 f3 (18...♙h3 19.♙f3 fxe3 20.fxe3±) 19.♙xf3 ♜f3 20.♜xc7 ♜f5! (20...♙h3 21.♙g3 ♟d5 22.♜xb7±) 21.d4 ♜e6 22.♜xb7 ♜af8.

17...fxe3 18.♟xe5!

Much better than 18.fxe3 ♟d5!? intending 19.♜d2 ♙xb5 20.♟xe5 ♜g5 when Black holds the initiative.

18...♙xe5 19.♙xe5 ♟d5

White is better after 19...♜xf2 20.♜xf2 exf2 21.♜xc7 ♜f5 22.♙d4!, planning moves like 23.♜g3 and 23.♜f1.

20.♜c4 ♜e6

White's game is slightly preferable after 20...♙e6 21.♜e4 ♜xe4 22.dxe4 ♟f4 23.♙xf4 ♜xf4 24.f3.

21.f4! c6 22.♜e4!?

White chances are on the kingside, worse is 22.a4 cxb5 23.axb5 ♜xa1 24.♜xa1 ♟xf4

25.♙xf4 ♖xc4 26.dxc4 ♜xf4. **22...♜f7!?**
 Or 22...cxb5 23.f5 ♜f7 (23...♙xf5 24.♙xf5
 ♜xf5 25.♜xd5++-) 24.f6! with nice at-
 tacking chances. **23.♜f3!?** Aiming to
 play 24.♜g3, again eying Black's king.
23...♜g6 Again Black gets into trouble
 on the kingside if he takes on b5: 23...cxb5
 24.♜g3 ♙c6 25.♙h5 ♜e7 26.♙g6. **24.g4!**
♜ae8 25.♜g3 After 25.d4 Black was pre-
 pared to sacrifice the exchange with
 25...♙xe5 26.dxe5 ♜xf4. **25...cxb5**
26.♙g1 ♙c6 27.f5 ♜f7 **28.♜ae1!?**
 Equally inaccurate are 28.♙d6?! ♙c3 and
 28.d4?! ♙c3 29.♜xe3 ♙xe2+ 30.♜xe2
 ♜d5 31.♜a2∞. Best was 28.♙b2! (intend-
 ing to attack on the kingside with h4 and
 g5) 28...♙f6 29.h4 ♜d5 30.♙h2 and White
 is better. **28...♜e7! 29.♙d6?** Another
 mistake. Since 29.♙b2 is met by 29...b4,
 White should play 29.♙a1! when
 29...♜xa3? is a blunder after 30.g5! (but
 not 30.h4 ♙c3+ intending 31.g5
 ♜xa1+-) 30...hxxg5 31.♙xg7! (31.♜xg5
 ♜e7+) 31...♙xg7 32.♜xg5+ ♙h8
 (32...♙f7 33.♙h5 mate) 33.♜h6+ ♙g8
 34.♜g6+ ♙h8 35.♜f3 ♙f4 36.♜h6+ ♙g8
 37.♜g3+ ♙f7 38.♜g7 mate. **29...♜f6**
30.♙xf8 ♜xf8 Black has enough for the
 exchange. **31.f6!?** ♙xf6 **32.g5 hxg5**
33.♜xg5 ♜c5 34.♜f5 ♜c3 35.♜ef1
♜e6 36.♜g6 ♜d2?? This blunder de-
 cides the game. Correct was 36...♙e8
 37.♜g5 and now a repetition after
 37...♙c6 38.♜g6, or 37...♙h7 38.♜d8∞.
37.♜g5+- ♜e7 37...♙f8 38.♜xg7+ ♙e8
 39.♜xf6. **38.♜xf6 1-0**

□ Mikhail Gurevich
 ■ Florian Handke
 Amsterdam 2002

1.c4 ♙f6 2.♙c3 e5 3.♙f3 ♙c6 4.a3 d5
 5.cxd5 ♙xd5 6.♜c2 ♙e6 7.e3 ♙d6

8.b4

8.♙e4 is the alternative.

8...0-0 9.♙b2 ♜e7!?

Black may also consider 9...a6 and 9...♙xc3.

10.♙b5

Perhaps it is better to put the pawn on b5. Af-
 ter 10.b5!?! ♙a5 (10...♙b8 11.♙xd5 ♙xd5
 12.e4 ♙e6 13.♙xe5±) 11.d4 ♙xc3 12.dxe5!
 ♙xb5 13.exd6 ♙xd6 14.♜c3 ♜f6 15.♜xf6
 gxf6 16.♙xf6 White has a slight advantage.

10...♙b6!?

Also good was 10...a5!?! 11.♙xc6 (11.♙xd5
 ♙xd5 12.e4 ♙d4!+) 11...bxc6 12.bxa5 f5.

11.0-0 a5 12.♙xc6 bxc6 13.♙e4 f5

14.♙g3!?

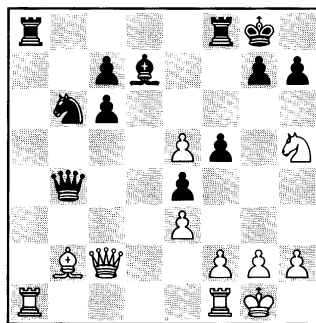
Stronger than 14.♙c5 ♙d5.

14...♙d7

It makes sense to transfer the knight to the
 queenside with 14...♙c4!?! 15.♙c3 e4
 16.♙d4 ♙e5 17.bxa5 ♙g4.

15.d4 e4 16.♙e5 ♙xe5 17.dxe5 axb4

18.axb4 ♜xb4 19.♙h5!?



With clear intentions along the main diag-
 onal.

19...♙e6 Or 19...♜c4 20.♜b1 ♜d3
 21.♜c1∞. **20.♜xc6 ♙f7 21.♙c3 ♜c4**
22.♜xc4 ♙xc4 Simpler was 22...♙xc4
 23.♜fc1=. **23.♙xg7 ♙xg7 24.e6+ ♙g6**
25.exf7 ♜xa1 White is slightly better in
 the ending after 25...♙xf7 26.♜a1 ♜a4
 27.♜fd1 ♙e6 28.♜b1. **26.♜xa1 ♙xf7**

27.♖a6 ♘b6!? Planning 27...♗a8.
 28.♗a7 ♘d5 29.♙d4 ♖b8 30.h4 ♖b1+
 31.♙h2 ♖c1 32.♗a6 c5 33.♖c6 c4
 34.♗d6 ♘e7 This is correct. After the ac-
 tive 34...♘b4 White keeps a slight edge
 with 35.♖f6+ ♙e7 36.♖xf5 ♘d3 37.♖h5 c3
 38.♖xh7+ ♙d6 39.♖h8 c2 40.♖c8 ♘xf2
 41.♙b2 ♖e1. 35.♙c5 c3? But this is a
 mistake. 35...♘g6 36.h5 ♘e5 37.♙d4 ♘d3
 38.♗d7+ ♙e6 39.♖xh7 ♘xf2 40.♙g3 ♘d3
 41.h6 c3 42.♖c7 c2 43.♙h2 ♘f2 with
 equality. 36.♗d7 c2 37.♖xe7+ ♙f6
 38.♙a3 Play is only equal after 38.♖c7
 ♖h1+ 39.♙xh1 c1♖+ 40.♙h2 ♙g6
 41.♙d6. 38...♗a1 39.♖xh7 ♖xa3
 40.♖h6+ ♙e5 41.♖c6 ♖a2 42.h5 c1♖
 White also wins after 42...♙d5 43.♖c8
 ♖a8 44.♖xc2 ♖h8 45.♙g3 ♖xh5 46.♙f4.
 43.♖xc1 ♖xf2 44.h6 ♙f6 45.♙g3 ♖e2
 46.♖h1 ♖xe3+ 47.♙f4 1-0

□ Alexander Beliavsky

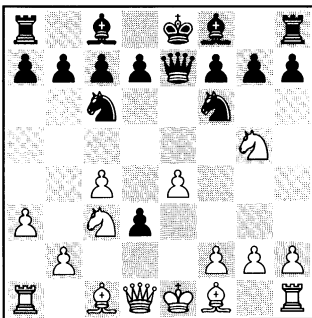
■ Maxim Turov

Copenhagen 2002

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.a3 e4

This is the most aggressive way to deal with
 4.a3. The present game was responsible for
 putting the line out of fashion it seems.

5.♘g5 ♖e7 6.d3 exd3 7.e4!



This important new concept allows White to
 take the centre and to develop his pieces in
 the most natural way.

Previously White used to play 7.♖xd3 ♘e5
 8.♖c2:

– 8...h6?! 9.♘ge4 ♘xe4 10.♘d5! ♖d6
 11.♖xe4 c6 12.♘e3 (not 12.f4 cxd5 13.cxd5
 f6 14.fxe5 ♖xe5 15.♖xe5+ fxe5=)
 12...♖e6 13.g3 d6 14.♙g2 g6 (perhaps
 14...♙e7!?) 15.f4 f5 (15...♘g4? 16.♘xg4
 ♖xe4 17.♘f6+--) 16.♖d4 ♘f7 17.♙d2
 ♖g8 18.0-0 ♙g7 19.♖d3 ♙d7 (19...♙xb2
 20.♖ab1 ♙f6 21.♘c2 ♙f8 22.♘d4) 20.
 ♖ab1 ♙f6 21.♘c2 ♙f8 22.e4 White was
 better in Chernin-Mikhalevski, Beer Sheva
 1993.

– 8...c6 9.e4 h6 10.♘f3! ♘xf3+ 11.gxf3 g6
 12.♙e3, Nogueiras-Vilela, Matanzas Capa-
 blanca Memorial 1993.

– 8...d6 9.e3 g6 10.♙e2 ♙g7 11.h3 0-0
 12.♙d2 h6 13.♘f3 ♙f5 14.♖b3 ♘d3+
 15.♙xd3 ♙xd3 16.♘e2 ♖e4 17.♖c1 ♘d7
 18.♙b4 a5 19.♘g3 ♖c6 20.♖xd3 axb4
 21.axb4 ♙xb2 22.♖c2 ♖a3 23.♖d2 ♘e5
 24.0-0 ♖xf3 25.♖xb2 ♖c6 26.♖c2 ♖fa8 and
 Black was better in Kortchnoi-Ivanchuk,
 Roquebrune rapid 1992.

7...h6 8.♘f3 d5

Very aggressive. Black cannot take on e4.

– 8...♘xe4 9.♘d5 ♖c5 (9...♖d8 10.♙xd3
 ♘c5 11.♙c2 (11.0-0) 11...♙e7 12.0-0 0-0
 13.b4 with the initiative) 10.♖xd3! ♖xf2+
 (10...♖a5+ 11.b4 ♙xb4+ 12.♘xb4 ♘xb4
 13.♖xe4+ ♘d8 14.♙d2 ♖e8 15.♖xe8+
 ♙xe8 16.♙xb4±; 10...♘xf2 11.♖e2+)
 11.♙d1 ♘c5 12.♖b1! and wins because of
 two unavoidable threats: 13.♙e3 and
 13.♘xc7+.

– 8...g6 9.♙xd3 d6 10.♘d5 ♖d8 11.0-0
 ♙g7 12.h3 0-0 13.♙e3 ♖e8 14.♖c2 ♘e5
 15.♘xe5 dxe5 16.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 17.c5 c6
 18.♖f1 White is slightly better, Schlosser-
 Schenk, Austria 2004.

9.cxd5 ♘xe4 10.♙e3 ♘xc3 11.bxc3

♟e5 12.♙xd3 ♘g4

White is also better after 12...♞xd3+ 13.♞xd3 ♞d8 14.0-0 ♙e7 15.c4 c5 16.♙f4 0-0 17.♞d2 b6 18.♞ae1 ♙d6 19.♙xd6 ♞xd6 20.♞e3 ♙d7 21.♞e4 ♞g6 22.♞g3 ♞f5 23.♞e3 ♖h7 24.♞c3 f6 25.♞e3 ♞ae8 26.♞fe1, Delchev-Papa, Zurich 2002.

13.0-0 ♞xe3 14.fxe3 ♙d7 Black does not survive after 14...♞xe3+ 15.♖h1 ♙e7 (15...♞c5 16.♞e5) 16.♙b5+. **15.e4 ♞c5+ 16.♖h1 0-0-0 17.♞b3 ♞e8 18.a4** With a decisive attack. **18...a5 19.e5 g5 20.♙b5 ♙xb5 21.axb5 b6** Or 21...g4 22.♞d4 ♞xe5 23.♞xa5±. **22.♞a4 ♖b7 23.♞c4 ♞a3 24.♞c2** With multiple threats like 25.♞e4 and 25.d6. Black resigned. An important theoretical game, notable for Beliavsky's power-play.

□ Mikhail Gurevich

■ Anatoly Karpov

Hilversum 1993

1.c4 e5 2.♞c3 ♞f6 3.♞f3 ♞c6 4.a3 d6

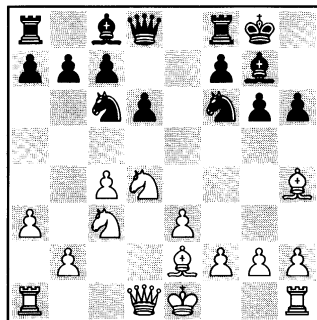
This continuation, as well as 4...g6, often leads to transpositions to the theoretical lines 4.g3 g6, or 4.g3 d6. That is unless White plays:

5.e3

or 5.d4. Here is the main difference in approach to the 4.a3 variation between Kortchnoi and me. I prefer to play flexible structures here, like 5.e3 or 5.d3, since they promise a long and complicated manoeuvring game. Kortchnoi uses every opportunity to open the centre with 5.d4 – in both the 4...d6 and the 4...g6 lines. In my opinion, it's just a matter of taste. Although I don't like White's pawn structure on the queenside in case of 5.d4, it leads to interesting dynamic play in the early stage of the game. It would be interesting to know Kortchnoi's opinion

about the subject. However, having known him for many years, I wouldn't expect to hear any compliments with respect to my ideas...

In the following two games unclear positions arose after 5.d4 exd4 6.♞xd4 g6 7.♙g5 ♙g7 8.e3 0-0 9.♙e2 h6 10.♙h4 and now:



– 10...♞xd4 11.exd4 ♙f5 12.0-0 c6 13.g4 ♙e6 14.f4 d5 15.f5 ♙c8 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♖h1 ♙d7 18.♙f3 ♙c6 19.♞c2 g5 20.♙g3 ♞c8 21.♞g2 ♞e8, Kortchnoi-Bacrot, Cannes 1996.

– 10...♞e8 11.♞xc6 bxc6 12.0-0 a5 13.♙f3 ♙d7 14.♞b1 ♞c8 15.♞e1 ♞b8 16.b4 axb4 17.axb4 ♞g4 18.♞b3 ♞e5 19.♙e2 ♙f5 20.e4 ♙e6 21.f4 ♞d7 22.♞c2 ♞a6 23.♙f2 ♙xc4 24.♞a1 ♙xe2 25.♞xa6 ♙xa6 26.b5 ♙b7 27.bxc6 ♙xc6 28.♞d1 ♙a8 29.♞xc7 ♞f6, Kortchnoi-Sokolov, Rethymnon 2003.

5...g6 6.d3

In a later game against Karpov I played 6.g3 ♙g7 7.♙g2 0-0 8.d3 ♙d7 9.0-0 ♞c8 10.♞b1 ♙h3 11.b4 ♙xg2 12.♖xg2 ♞e8 13.♞c2 (13.e4!?) 13...♞d8 14.♙b2 ♞e6 15.♞bd1 c6 16.h3 h5 17.♞e4 ♞xe4 18.dxe4 ♞c7 19.♞d3 a5 20.♞fd1 axb4 21.axb4 ♞ed8 22.♞3d2 and White was slightly better, Gurevich-Karpov, Cap d'Agde 2000.

6...♙g7 7.♙e2 0-0 8.0-0 ♞e8 9.♞c2 ♙f5

Anatoly would like to provoke me into

playing 10.e4 in order to meet it by 10...♙g4, when Black would control the d4-square with comfortable play.

10.♟d2!? a6!?

Not the blunder 10...d5? 11.cxd5 ♟xd5 12.♟xd5 ♜xd5 13.e4 ♟d4 14.♟d1+.

11.♞b1

Preparing b4 rather than falling for 11.b4?! e4! 12.dxe4 ♟xe4 13.♟dxe4 ♙xe4.

11...h5 12.b4

Starting active play on the queenside.

12...♟h7 13.♟d5!?

Intending a4 and b5. The immediate 13.a4 is answered by 13...a5!?

13...♙e6 14.a4 ♟b8!

Intending c6, d5. This is a clever way to deal with the threat of b4-b5-b6. The alternatives were:

– 14...♙xd5 15.cxd5 ♟e7 16.♟b3 c6 17.dxc6 bxc6 18.♟c4!? planning 19.♟a5, and

– 14...a5 15.b5 ♙xd5 16.cxd5 ♟b4 17.♟c4 ♟f6 18.♙f3± aiming to play 19.♙a3.

15.b5 axb5 16.axb5 c6 17.bxc6 bxc6 18.♟b6?!

Equal is 18.♟c3 d5 19.♟f3. But more interesting was 18.♟b4!?

18...♞a7

Not 18...♞a6 19.c5 d5 20.e4! △ 21.d4.

19.c5 d5 20.e4?!

This is the cause of my future problems with the c5-pawn. Better was 20.♙b2!? with ideas of 21.♟f3 or 21.f4 and White has the better perspectives.

20...♟e7!

Emphasizing the weakness of c5. Worse is 20...d4?! 21.♟dc4 ♟d7 22.♟d6 ♞f8 23.f4±.

21.♟f3 ♞a5 22.♟a4 ♟d7 23.♙d2 ♞a7 24.♞fc1 d4 25.♞b2

Intending ♟b6. Black is slightly better after the immediate 25.♟b6 ♞a2 26.♞b2 ♞xb2 27.♟xb2 ♞b8.

25...g5!? 26.♟b6

Or 26.♙b4 g4 27.♟d2 ♙h6 28.♞cb1 h4.

26...g4 27.♟e1 ♙f8 28.♟xd7 ♜xd7 29.f4! exf4 30.♙xf4 ♞ea8 31.g3 ♞a2

Perhaps just 31...♞a5!?

32.♙d1!

A blunder is 32.♟g2? ♞xb2 33.♟xb2 ♞a2+.

32...♟d8 33.♟g2 ♞8a5

Stronger was 33...♟g5! 34.♙xg5 ♜xg5 35.♟f4 ♞2a5±.

34.♞xa2 ♞xa2 35.♟b1 ♟a5

Again the alternative was 35...♟g5.

36.♙b3 ♙xb3 37.♟xb3 ♟f6

Again aiming to attack the c5-pawn with 38...♟d7.

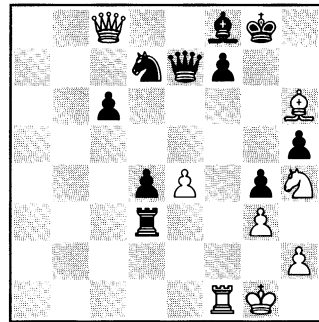
38.♞f1!?

White leaves his c5-weakness in favour of a hunt for Black's king.

38...♞a3 39.♟b8 ♜xc5 40.♙h6 ♟d7

41.♟e8 ♟e7 42.♟c8 ♞xd3 43.♟h4!

With compensation.

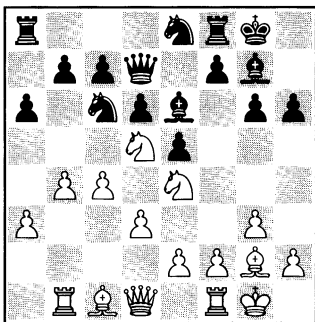


43...♟e6 44.♙xf8 ♟xf8 45.♟d8! c5 A perpetual results from 45...♟xe4 46.♟g5+ ♟g6 47.♟d8+. The same goes for 45...♞e3 46.♞f5! ♞xe4 47.♞g5+ ♟h7 48.♞xh5+ ♟g8, but not 48...♟g7? 49.♟f5+ ♟g8 50.♟xf8+ ♟xf8 51.♞h8 mate. **46.♟f5** But not 46.♞f5? ♞d1+ 47.♟g2 ♟xe4+–. **46...♞f3 47.♞xf3** 47.♟e7+ ♟g7 48.♟f5+ ♞xf5? 49.♞xf5 ♟g6 50.♟d5± Karpov. **47...gxf3 48.♟e7+ ♟g7 49.♟f5+ ♟g8** Losing is 49...♟g6 50.h4! ♟f6 (50...♟xe4

51. ♖g5+ ♔h7 52. ♖g7 mate; 50... ♖h7
 51. ♖g8+ ♔f6 52. ♖g7 mate) 51. ♖xf8.
50. ♖e7+ ♔g7 51. ♖f5+ ½-½
 An interesting manoeuvring game which
 led to dynamic equality at the end.

□ Mikhail Gurevich
 ■ Attila Groszpeter
 Pardubice 2000 (5)

**1.c4 e5 2. ♖c3 ♖f6 3. ♖f3 ♖c6 4.a3 g6
 5.g3 ♖g7 6. ♖g2 0-0 7.d3 d6 8.0-0 h6
 9.b4 a6 10. ♖b1 ♖e6 11. ♖d2 ♖d7
 12. ♖d5! ♖e8 13. ♖e4!?**



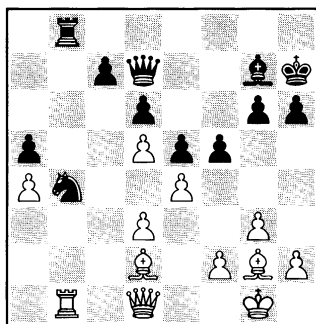
Intending 14. ♖xh6 or 14. ♖ec3. Worse was
 13.a4, as in Beim-Gurevich, Bad Godesberg
 2000. The game Chuchelov-Winants,
 Brussels 1997, saw 13. ♖e1 ♖h3 14. ♖h1
 ♖d4 15.e3 ♖e6 16. ♖b2 ♖d8 17.a4 c6
 18. ♖b6 ♖c7 19.a5 f5.
13...f5 14. ♖ec3 ♖b8!?

Black wants to play 15...b5.
15.a4 ♖e7!?
 15...a5 is best met by 16.bxa5 (rather than
 16.b5 ♖d8 △ 17...b6) 16... ♖xa5 17. ♖a3,
 planning 18.c5 with good play on the
 queenside.
16. ♖d2!?

Preparing 17.b5, since after 16.b5?! a5
 17. ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 18. ♖d5 ♖d7 19. ♖d2
 Black has 19...b6.

16... ♖f6?!
 Correct was 16... ♖c8! (planning 17...c6)
 17.b5 a5 18.f4 b6 with unclear play. Black
 intends 19... ♖e7 and 20... ♖f6.

17. ♖xf6+ ♖xf6 18.b5± ♖ff8 Or 18...a5
 19. ♖d5 ♖xd5 20.cxd5±. **19.bxa6 bxa6
 20. ♖c2** Planning to exchange all rooks
 with 21. ♖xb8 and 22. ♖b1. Black's a-pawn
 is weak. **20... ♖c6!?** **21. ♖xb8 ♖xb8
 22. ♖b1 ♖b4 23. ♖d1 a5** White is
 slightly better after 23...c5 24.a5!?.
24. ♖d5!? ♖xd5 **25. ♖d5** Not 24...c5?
 25. ♖xh6+- . **25.cxd5 ♖h7** Aiming to ex-
 change the dark-squared bishops with
 26...h5 and 27... ♖h6. **26.e4!±**



Suddenly 27. ♖h3 hangs in the air with
 good attacking chances on the kingside.
 Black therefore gives a pawn pinning his
 hopes on the bishops of opposite colour.
**26... ♖f8 27. ♖xb4 axb4 28. ♖xb4 f4
 29.a5 ♖a8 30. ♖a4 ♖c8 31. ♖b5 h5
 32. ♖b1** White prepares to put the rook
 behind the passed pawn with 33. ♖a1. Of
 course not the immediate 32. ♖a4? ♖b8+- .
**32...fxg3 33.hxg3 ♖a6?! 34. ♖xa6
 ♖xa6 35. ♖a1 ♖h6 36. ♖a2** The ending
 wins for White. **36...g5 37. ♖f1 ♖a7
 38. ♖e2 g4 39.a6 ♔g6 40. ♖d1 ♖g5
 41. ♖a4** Black resigned since there is no
 good answer to the manoeuvre ♖a4-c6-b7,
 as 41... ♖xa6 fails to 42. ♖e8+.

CHAPTER 18

Who is Who

Soon after his naturalization **Mikhail Gurevich** jokingly remarked that he had even started 'to play like a Belgian' (no offence intended). Innumerable tournament wins later we know better of course. It is ages ago that Mikhail wrote a theoretical article, so should we be surprised that he wrote two chapters for this SOS volume?

In between working for his university exams and winning the Championship of his country twenty-year old Czech top grandmaster **David Navara** graciously consented to write an SOS. As there is no easy advantage for White against the Petroff anyway, you might as well play 4.♘c4!?

Top GM **Alexander Beliavsky** – the former trainer of Karpov and Kasparov – needs no introduction of course. In this SOS Volume 'Big Al' presents his favourite weapon against the Volga Gambit.

Bucharest-based former Moldavian grandmaster **Dorian Rogozenko** has established quite a reputation for himself as a serious author. As a former student of the famous Moldavian trainer Chebanenko who could be better qualified to write on 5.h3 as the ideal weapon versus the Chebanenko Slav?

The young Canadian grandmaster **Mark Bluvshstein** is the strongest player in the world to regularly employ 3.♗d3 against the French Defence. With his natural adversity to theory he explains the ins and outs of his pet system.

How natural is it to develop your knight to c6 in the French Defence not allowing yourself

the lever c7-c5? Dutch grandmaster **Karel van der Weide** explains the main ideas of the experts Rozentalis, Keitlinghaus and Thesing.

Ian Rogers has quite a reputation for playing all sorts of dodgy lines. Fact is that the man from Down Under plays the Caro-Kann more often than, say, the Scandinavian. Check out a bold central thrust versus the popular Fantasy Variation.

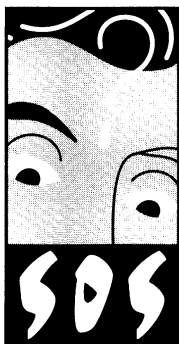
In a thorough theoretical overview **Oleg Chernikov** demonstrates that Black is OK in the Rauzer with 6...g6. With some 45 years of tournament experience in this line the grandmaster from Nizhny Novgorod is its main protagonist.

Former Ukrainian, now Slovenian, GM **Adrian Mikhalchishin** takes a critical SOS look at the Sozin. Why not just attack that bishop with 6...♘a5?

Carlos Matamoros, grandmaster from Ecuador, makes good use of his experience as a trainer in our chapter on Pillsbury's old weapon against the Evans Gambit.

When reviewing SOS Volume 2 in Yearbook 73, SOS-author **Glenn Flear** argued that there was no conflict of interest whatsoever. It is clearly in our SOS interest to keep him writing on surprising opening lines. So, here is Glenn's survey on a QGA sideline – why not just protect the gambit pawn?

Creativity is **Oleg Romanishin's** hallmark. The Ukrainian grandmaster advocates to radically change the course of play in the Kan Variation by means of 6...e5!?



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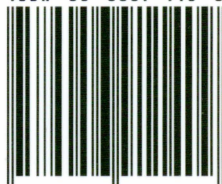
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